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## ABSTRACT

The following are among the 71 papers included: "Impacts of Transformative Leadership Education in a Professional Development Context" (Adrian et al.); "Toward a Sociology of Participation in Adult Education Programs" (Babchuk, Courtney); "Race, Gender, and the Politics of Professionalization" (Bailey, Tisdell, Cervero); "Conceptions of Instruction in the Workplace" (Beno); "Appalachian Women Learning in Community" (Bingman); "Topography of Adult Education Theory and Research" (Boshier); "Conceptualising Learning from Experience" (Boud); "Effects of Continuing Professional Education on the Upward Career Mobility of Health Services Administrators" (Brown, Easton); "Radical Worker Education for Academics?" (Butterwick, Dawson, Kastner); "Ethic of Care in the Legal Profession: Not for Women Only" (Carr); "Re-enchanting Research" (Carriere); "Integrating Agency and Structure in Program Planning Theory" (Cervero, Wilson); "Evolving the Method: Grounded Theory in the Context of Post-hoc Analysis"; (Courtney, Babchuk, Jha); "Reproduction and Resistance in a University Graduate Program of Adult Education" (Cunningham, Smith); "Popular Social Movements as Educative Forces" (Dykstra, Law); "Making Literacy Functional in Rural West Africa" (Easton, Ilboudo, Mukweso); "Adult Education and the Cross-Cultural Transfer of Innovation" (Easton, Sidikou); "Postmodern Doors into a Modern Community College" (Falk); "Organizational Learning, the Learning



Organization, and Adult Education" (Finger, Woolis); "Critical Rationality from a Cross-Cultural Perspective" (Hemphill); "Heterosexist Discourse in Adult Education" (Hill); "African Americans and Adult Literacy Education: Towards a More Inclusive Model of Participation" (James) "Revitalizing Havighurst's Social Role Research" (James, Abney); "'Students at Risk'" (Jha, Dirkx); "Teaching Behaviour as a Function of Faculty's Teaching Philosophy" (Kreber); "Adult Learning in the Aftermath of Job Loss" (Laswell); "Toward Recovering and Reconstructing Andragogy" (Little); "Self-Assessment" (Marienau); "Ethnicity-Related Adult Education Cultural Diversity Programs" (Martin); "Toward a Substantive Theory of Control of Learning within Grassroots Initiatives" (McKnight); "From Workers to Trade Unionists" (Schied); "Parents, Learning, and Project Head Start" (Sissel); "Whom Should We Fund?" (Umble); and "Participatory Evaluation as an Instrument of Popular Education" (Zacharakis-Jutz). (MN)

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# 35th Annual Adult Education Research Conference



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## 1994 Proceedings

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
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35th Annual Adult Education

Research Conference

(AERC)

P R O C E E D I N G S

MAY 20 - 22, 1994

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

COMPILED BY:  
MELANIE HYAMS  
JOSEPH ARMSTRONG  
ELAINE ANDERSON

## NOTICE

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Dear AERC Participants:

On behalf of the steering committee, we welcome you to the 35th Annual Adult Education Research Conference.

By participating in this conference you join a lengthy and proud tradition of inquiry and dissemination. The conference has become a major forum for the advancement of knowledge related to adult education, the record of our proceedings a primary resource for scholars in the field.

As a forum, the Adult Education Research Conference cherishes a tradition of collegiality that embraces graduate students, faculty, and practitioners in a culture of fellowship and inquiry. Papers and symposia stand on their merit, not on the professional reputations of the author(s). As a record, this set of proceedings will enter the ranks of thirty-five volumes which set forth the changing map of the territory. As you will see, the thirty-fifth year presents a considerable change in terrain from even a decade ago. We hope you enjoy both the culture of our gathering and the record of our scholarship.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the considerable work and dedication of our hosts, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. As you will soon discover, a smooth running conference is an invisible but crucial aspect to our success. We thank them for their work and dedication to our conference.

Elizabeth Kasl (Co-chair)  
School for Transformative Learning  
California Institute of Integral Studies  
San Francisco, California, USA

Dan Pratt (Co-chair)  
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| Vanessa Sheared  | (1993-95) | San Francisco State University           |



Dear AERC Participant:

Welcome to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the 35th Annual Adult Education Research Conference. It is truly a privilege to have the opportunity to host the conference during this milestone anniversary.

We would like to thank the AERC Steering Committee for putting together an excellent program. In addition, we would like to thank the members of the program committee, who were responsible for planning all local arrangements. Finally, we would like to offer a special thanks to the staff of the Bureau of Educational Research and Service in the College of Education, whose support ranged from graphic design to managing the registration process.

A special acknowledgement is made to the Faculty Senate Research Council and the Office of Research Administration at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, who provided partial funding support for the publication of these proceedings through the Scholarly Activities Research Incentive Fund (SARIF). We wish to thank Dr. Lee L. Riedinger, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Dr. Ken Walker, Research Council Chair for their support.

We hope that you have an enjoyable stay in East Tennessee and that you find the conference to be productive and rewarding.

Carol Kasworm  
Conference Co-Chair

Ralph Brockett  
Conference Co-Chair

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PAPERS

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Judith Adrian, Tim Neuman,<br/>Boyd Rossing &amp; Sue Sadowske</b>               | Impacts of Transformative Leadership<br>Education in a Professional<br>Development Context: The National<br>Extension Leadership Development<br>(NELD) Program | 1  |
| <b>Wayne A. Babchuk &amp;<br/>Sean Courtney</b>                                     | Toward a Sociology of Participation in<br>Adult Education Programs: The Personal<br>Influence Hypothesis                                                       | 7  |
| <b>Juanita Johnson Bailey,<br/>Elizabeth J. Tisdell<br/>&amp; Ronald M. Cervero</b> | Race, Gender, and the Politics of<br>Professionalization                                                                                                       | 13 |
| <b>Ian Baptiste</b>                                                                 | Adult Education as Political<br>Participation                                                                                                                  | 19 |
| <b>Hal Beder &amp;<br/>Robert L. Dilworth</b>                                       | Looking Beyond the Obvious: How the<br>National Literacy Act Translates to<br>Adult Education Policy at State Level                                            | 25 |
| <b>Jane E. Beno</b>                                                                 | Conceptions of Instruction in the<br>Workplace                                                                                                                 | 31 |
| <b>Mary Beth Bingman</b>                                                            | Appalachian Women Learning in Community                                                                                                                        | 37 |
| <b>Roger Boshier</b>                                                                | A Topography of Adult Education Theory<br>and Research                                                                                                         | 43 |
| <b>David Boud</b>                                                                   | Conceptualising Learning from Experience:<br>Developing a Model for Facilitation                                                                               | 49 |
| <b>Stephen Brookfield</b>                                                           | Tales from the Dark Side: A<br>Phenomenography of Adult Critical<br>Reflection                                                                                 | 55 |

|                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                           |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Richard Brown &amp;<br/>Peter Easton</b>                                   | <b>The Effects of Continuing Professional<br/>Education on the Upward Career Mobility<br/>of Health Services Administrators</b>                                           | <b>61</b>  |
| <b>Shauna Butterwick,<br/>Jane Dawson &amp;<br/>Andrea Kastner</b>            | <b>Radical worker education for academics?</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>67</b>  |
| <b>Camille A. Carr</b>                                                        | <b>An Ethic of Care in the Legal Profession:<br/>Not for Women Only</b>                                                                                                   | <b>73</b>  |
| <b>Elizabeth Carriere</b>                                                     | <b>Re-enchanting Research: Using Narrative<br/>in Antiracism Education</b>                                                                                                | <b>79</b>  |
| <b>Ronald M. Cervero<br/>&amp; Arthur L. Wilson</b>                           | <b>Integrating Agency and Structure in<br/>Program Planning Theory</b>                                                                                                    | <b>85</b>  |
| <b>M. Carolyn Clark,<br/>Rosemary S. Caffarella<br/>&amp; Peggy B. Ingram</b> | <b>The View from Beneath the Ceiling: The<br/>Link Between Development and Practice<br/>for Women in Midmanagement Leadership<br/>Roles</b>                               | <b>91</b>  |
| <b>Michael Collins</b>                                                        | <b>From Self-directed Learning to Post-<br/>modernist Thought in Adult Education:<br/>Relocating our Object of Theory and<br/>Practice</b>                                | <b>97</b>  |
| <b>Sean Courtney,<br/>Wayne Babchuk &amp;<br/>LaDeane Jha</b>                 | <b>Evolving the Method: Grounded Theory<br/>in the Context of Post-hoc Analysis</b>                                                                                       | <b>103</b> |
| <b>Phyllis Cunningham &amp;<br/>Glenn Smith</b>                               | <b>Reproduction and Resistance in a<br/>University Graduate Program of<br/>Adult Education: Developing<br/>Ideological Space for Program<br/>Transformation</b>           | <b>109</b> |
| <b>Sammie M. Dortch</b>                                                       | <b>Let the Brothers Speak: African<br/>American Men Designing an Inclusive<br/>Learning Paradigm that Transforms an<br/>Urban Community College Classroom<br/>Culture</b> | <b>115</b> |

|                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                     |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Corina Dykstra &amp;<br/>Michael Law</b>                          | <b>Popular Social Movements as Educative<br/>Forces: Towards a Theoretical<br/>Framework</b>                                                                        | <b>121</b> |
| <b>Daniel V. Eastmond</b>                                            | <b>Alone But Together: Adult Distance<br/>Study Through Computer Conferencing</b>                                                                                   | <b>127</b> |
| <b>Peter A. Easton,<br/>Paul T. Iboudo<br/>&amp; Mwenene Mukweso</b> | <b>Making Literacy Functional in Rural<br/>West Africa: The Experience of<br/><u>Groupements villageois</u> in Burkina Faso</b>                                     | <b>133</b> |
| <b>Peter A. Easton &amp;<br/>Maman S. Sidikou</b>                    | <b>Adult Education and the Cross-<br/>Cultural Transfer of Innovation: A<br/>Curricular Analysis of the Rural<br/>Organization Development Project in<br/>Niger</b> | <b>139</b> |
| <b>Cliff Falk</b>                                                    | <b>Postmodern Doors into a Modern<br/>Community College: of Empires and<br/>Entryways, of Doors Jammed Open and<br/>Door Jambs Broken</b>                           | <b>145</b> |
| <b>Matthias Finger<br/>&amp; Diana Woolis</b>                        | <b>Organizational Learning, the Learning<br/>Organization, and Adult Education</b>                                                                                  | <b>151</b> |
| <b>Daniele D. Flannery</b>                                           | <b>Women's Learning in Leisure</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>157</b> |
| <b>Virginia G. Gonzalez<br/>&amp; Barbara A. Macaulay</b>            | <b>When More is Less: Perceived Barriers<br/>to Collaborative Learning by Adult<br/>College Students</b>                                                            | <b>163</b> |
| <b>Group for Collaborative<br/>Inquiry</b>                           | <b>A Model for Transformative Learning:<br/>Individual Development and Social<br/>Action</b>                                                                        | <b>169</b> |
| <b>Talmadge C. Guy</b>                                               | <b>Prophecy from the Periphery: Alain<br/>Locke's Philosophy of Cultural<br/>Pluralism and Adult Education</b>                                                      | <b>175</b> |
| <b>Felecia C. Harris</b>                                             | <b>Lugenia Burns Hope and The Neighbor-<br/>hood Union: Culturally Grounded<br/>Community-Based Programming in the<br/>Early Twentieth Century</b>                  | <b>181</b> |

|                                                                                                                |                                                                                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>David F. Hemphill</b>                                                                                       | Critical Rationality from a Cross-Cultural Perspective                                                       | 187 |
| <b>Robert J. Hill</b>                                                                                          | Heterosexist Discourse in Adult Education: A Gay/Lesbian Critique                                            | 193 |
| <b>John Holford</b>                                                                                            | Adult Education without a Soul? Colonialism, Economic Progress, and Democratic Underdevelopment in Hong Kong | 199 |
| <b>Ronald M. James</b>                                                                                         | African Americans and Adult Literacy Education: Towards a More Inclusive Model of Participation              | 205 |
| <b>Wayne B. James<br/>&amp; Howard M. Abney, Jr.</b>                                                           | Revitalizing Havighurst's Social Role Research                                                               | 211 |
| <b>LaDeane R. Jha<br/>&amp; John M. Dirkx</b>                                                                  | "Students at Risk:" A Practitioner-based Approach to Noncompletion in Adult Education                        | 217 |
| <b>Carolyn Kreber</b>                                                                                          | Teaching Behaviour as a Function of Faculty's Teaching Philosophy                                            | 223 |
| <b>Terri Deems Laswell</b>                                                                                     | Adult Learning in the Aftermath of Job Loss: Exploring the Transformative Potential                          | 229 |
| <b>David Little</b>                                                                                            | Toward Recovering and Reconstructing Andragogy                                                               | 235 |
| <b>Catherine Marienau</b>                                                                                      | Self-assessment: An Essential Skill for Learning and Performance in the Workplace                            | 241 |
| <b>Victoria J. Marsick,<br/>Karen E. Watkins,<br/>Judy O'Neil,<br/>Nancy Dixon &amp;<br/>Ralph Catalanello</b> | Portrait of a Learning Organization: Stories from Early Adopters                                             | 247 |

|                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                 |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Larry G. Martin</b>                                                  | <b>Ethnicity-Related Adult Education<br/>Cultural Diversity Programs: A<br/>Typology</b>                                                        | <b>253</b> |
| <b>Robert J. McKenna,<br/>Gary J. Conti &amp;<br/>Robert A. Fellenz</b> | <b>Learning in Personal and Professional<br/>Situations</b>                                                                                     | <b>259</b> |
| <b>Joyce S. McKnight</b>                                                | <b>Toward a Substantive Theory of<br/>Control of Learning within Grassroots<br/>Initiatives</b>                                                 | <b>265</b> |
| <b>Nod Miller</b>                                                       | <b>Invisible Colleges Revealed:<br/>Professional Networks and Personal<br/>Interconnections amongst Adult<br/>Educators</b>                     | <b>271</b> |
| <b>Shelley C. Mishoe &amp;<br/>Bradley C. Courtenay</b>                 | <b>Critical Thinking in Respiratory<br/>Care Practice</b>                                                                                       | <b>276</b> |
| <b>Vivian Wilson Mott</b>                                               | <b>The Role of Intuition in the<br/>Reflective Practice of Adult<br/>Education</b>                                                              | <b>282</b> |
| <b>Tom Nesbit</b>                                                       | <b>Tackling Adult Innumeracy</b>                                                                                                                | <b>288</b> |
| <b>John M. Peters</b>                                                   | <b>Instructors-As-Researchers-and-<br/>Theorists: Action Research in a<br/>Community College</b>                                                | <b>294</b> |
| <b>Ronald Podeschi</b>                                                  | <b>The Rise and Fall of Liberal Adult<br/>Education: CSLEA at Mid-century</b>                                                                   | <b>300</b> |
| <b>Amy D. Rose</b>                                                      | <b>Creating a Middle-Class Culture:<br/>Arthur Bestor and Adult Education<br/>in Transition</b>                                                 | <b>306</b> |
| <b>Jovita M. Ross-Gordon</b>                                            | <b>Toward a Critical Multicultural<br/>Pedagogy for Adult Education</b>                                                                         | <b>312</b> |
| <b>Fred M. Schied</b>                                                   | <b>From Workers to Trade Unionists:<br/>Transformation and Instrumentalism in<br/>Workers and Adult Education After<br/>the First World War</b> | <b>318</b> |

|                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                          |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Christine Joanna Schlattner</b>                    | <b>The Body in Transformative Learning</b>                                                                                                                               | <b>324</b> |
| <b>Peggy A. Sissel</b>                                | <b>Parents, Learning and Project Head Start: A Socio-political Analysis</b>                                                                                              | <b>330</b> |
| <b>Thomas J. Sork</b>                                 | <b>Changing Dogmas in Mid-Stream: Responding to the Challenges to Rational Planning</b>                                                                                  | <b>336</b> |
| <b>Joyce Stalker</b>                                  | <b>Discourse, Power Relations and Male Bias: Reframing the Field</b>                                                                                                     | <b>342</b> |
| <b>Sherman M. Stanage</b>                             | <b>Adult Education as <i>Ethical</i> and <i>Moral Meaning Through Action</i></b>                                                                                         | <b>348</b> |
| <b>thINQ</b>                                          | <b>Phenomenology as an Interpretive Frame: The Evolution of a Research Method for Understanding How Learning is Experienced in Collaborative Inquiry Groups</b>          | <b>354</b> |
| <b>Elizabeth J. Tisdell<br/>&amp; Sylvia McLaurin</b> | <b>Effects of Including Gender and Multicultural Course Content on Classroom Dynamics in Adult Higher Education Classes: A Qualitative Study of Faculty Perspectives</b> | <b>360</b> |
| <b>Kimberly A. Townsend</b>                           | <b>The Making of a WASP: Promises and Realities of a Nontraditional Role</b>                                                                                             | <b>366</b> |
| <b>Michael K. Turner<br/>&amp; John M. Dirkx</b>      | <b>Beyond the Vessel: Fostering Adoption of Innovation and Change in Adult Education Practice</b>                                                                        | <b>372</b> |
| <b>Paula Burk Uhler</b>                               | <b>While Collar Workers in the 50's: A Lack of Coverage and Responsibility by Adult Education</b>                                                                        | <b>378</b> |
| <b>Karl E. Umble</b>                                  | <b>Whom Should We Fund? A Multi-site Study of Program Adaptation, Implementation and Persistence in a Public Agency Grants Program</b>                                   | <b>384</b> |



|                                                       |                                                                                                                                |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Thomas Valentine<br/>&amp; Kwang Kim</b>           | Understanding Adult Learners'<br>Preferences for Classroom Social<br>Environment                                               | 390 |
| <b>Joyce A. Walker</b>                                | The Letters in the Attic: The Mid-<br>life Perspectives of Educated Women<br>Reflecting on Personal Success and<br>Achievement | 396 |
| <b>Arthur L. Wilson<br/>&amp; Kenneth E. Melichar</b> | History as Critique: Collective<br>Representation in Constructing the<br>Pasts of Adult Education                              | 401 |
| <b>Ken Wolensky</b>                                   | An Oral History of Workers' Education<br>in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Coal<br>Mining Region: Min Matheson and the<br>ILGWU     | 407 |
| <b>Baiyin Yang<br/>&amp; Ronald M. Cervero</b>        | An Empirical Test of Houle's<br>Typology of Professionals                                                                      | 413 |
| <b>Jeff Zacharakis-Jutz</b>                           | Participatory Evaluation as an<br>Instrument of Popular Education                                                              | 419 |

#### **PANELS**

|                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                          |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Ralph G. Brockett,<br/>Rosemary S. Caffarella,<br/>Lorraine A. Cavaliere,<br/>Lucy M. Guglielmino,<br/>Carol E. Kasworm<br/>&amp; Huey B. Long</b> | Self-direction in Adult Learning:<br>What We Have Learned and What We<br>Need to Know                    | 425 |
| <b>Tom Heaney,<br/>Judy Austermiller,<br/>Lee Williams<br/>&amp; John Gaventa</b>                                                                     | Learning from the Highlander<br>Experience: Contributions of the<br>Post-civil Rights Period             | 431 |
| <b>Esther D. Leonelli,<br/>Martha W. Merson<br/>&amp; Bonnie B. Mullinix</b>                                                                          | Giving Practitioners a Say:<br>Participatory Models of Research for<br>Adult Basic Education Mathematics | 437 |

## SYMPOSIUM

**Kyung Hi Kim,  
Ramon Flecha,  
Mechthild Hart,  
Fred Schied,  
Joye Knight  
& Sherman Stanage**

Diversity in Critical Perspectives  
in Adult Education: Conflicts and  
Commonalities

443

IMPACTS OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN A PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT: THE NATIONAL EXTENSION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
(NELD) PROGRAM

Judith Adrian, Tim Neuman, Boyd Rossing, & Sue Sadowske  
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ABSTRACT

In the W. K. Kellogg Foundation supported National Extension Leadership Development (NELD) Program, Jerold W. Apps integrated professional leadership development with transformative and experiential education approaches. Initial impacts are described in the areas of intern experiences, program evolution, staff perceptions, ripple effects, and social significance.

NELD STORIES

\* At the end of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant period, we met to celebrate accomplishments. Of the two hundred guests, seventy had spent one to two intense years as NELD interns learning about personal leadership through transformative and experiential educational processes. At the recognition ceremony, the interns stood in an alphabetical circle, shoulder to shoulder. Consecutively, as names were read, each person received a NELD lapel pin--a commemoration of their personal and professional growth--from the colleague to their right. Divided into three classes, many of the interns had not previously met. They had, however, completed common learning experiences. Powerful experiences. Impromptu, after each person was pinned, the group began to hold hands. The chain of hands--black, female, yellow, prosthetic, red, male, white, brown, large and small--grew until the group stood, encircling their companions, their children, their advisors, and their administrators. After the last pin was placed, there was, first a shared silence, then an eruption of smiles and tears and hugs.

\* In the spring of 1993, none of us realized that the winds and storms and surging water on the Missouri River forebode the coming midwestern floods. Nature reinforced our lack of control. Comfortable in the unpredictability of experiential education, the NELD staff embraced the serendipitous events, folding them into the curriculum of this diversity seminar where our focus was on the Mandan and Hidatsa Indian peoples: their lives, leadership, culture, and history as intertwined with the River.

\* A flip chart stood for three years in the corner of our crowded and spirited NELD office as a metaphor for shared leadership. Early on, the staff sat around this flip chart planning the educational themes and teaching approaches for the first three years of the National Extension Leadership Development Program. The message conveyed was that the decision-making and leadership would be shared--two of the tenets of NELD's Leadership for the Next Age. For three vitalizing years the NELD staff lived the leadership ideas being advocated.

\* John, a sixty year old African American man, was a long-time employee in the audiovisual department of an old Southern hotel where we held a NELD seminar. John quietly helped with the set up and behind the scenes organization for the five days of meetings. Regularly, he stood by, purportedly trouble shooting, actually listening to the group discussions and watching these diverse adults

interact. As we packed materials to ship home, he shyly asked if he might have copies of the NELD video and books--to better understand Leadership for the Next Age.

\* The question was, "Is the agenda for the NELD Mexico seminar slanted too much toward the views of the economically poor?" The answer was, "Seventy percent of the population of Mexico lives in poverty. We are offering them a proportional voice."

What do these stories share? They represent impacts of the experiential and transformative leadership education in NELD related to: 1) intern experiences, 2) program evolution, 3) staff perceptions, 4) ripple effects, and 5) social significance. We share a concern that words can trivialize the impacts, so have chosen to introduce the NELD journey through story and metaphor.

#### NELD OVERVIEW

The National Extension Leadership Development (NELD) Program was about transformation: personal and collective. In NELD, the process of developing a personal philosophy of leadership was a process of personal transformation, first preceding, then accompanying, organizational transformation. The intern seminar program centered in four week-long sessions. The themes were: Developing a personal philosophy of leadership, Organizational change and renewal, Living diversity, and Creating a global perspective.

In the minds of the staff, the four seminars comprised 1/5 of the curriculum; 4/5 was self-developed. As self-developed learners, interns were challenged to write personal philosophies of leadership; to compose individual credo statements; to develop and implement personal learning plans; to interview their university president or corporate CEO; to read widely on leadership and beyond in poetry and story; to interact with an advisor; to practice reflective learning through journaling and reflecting on thoughts, feelings and actions; to undertake periodic reflections; to take and interpret leadership and health-risk assessments; to develop an innovative leadership project; and to organize mini-internships. Groups of interns arranged face to face meetings and teleconferences.

A cyclic process of reflection and action were central to transformation in NELD. Evaluation in NELD was recreated as reflection and folded into the learning experience through reflecting in action and on action. Participants were regularly asked to write on their thoughts and feelings. Sometimes these were shared with classmates or project staff, other times they were private. Reflection was further incorporated into seminars by building in time for journal writing and sharing, taking long lunches and breaks, and reflecting on the seminar processes. In all instances, the intent was to deepen the personal and collective relevance of NELD experiences--to set the stage for "taking leadership for the next age home."

As he conceptualized NELD, Jerold W. Apps, NELD National Coordinator, began with the assumption that transformative and experiential approaches to leadership development are needed as the world around us becomes ever more complex, more changeable, and seemingly less predictable. All who touched NELD were challenged to become

comfortable with, and even seek out, change. Central to leadership development in NELD was what Tom Peters (1987) called a paradox for leaders: to create the internal stability that allows the pursuit of constant change (p. 395).

#### NELD IMPACTS

##### INTERN EXPERIENCES: SEMINARS AND SELF-DEVELOPED LEARNING

Most of the following statements were compiled from written intern reflections. The statements represent themes, not unanimous agreement. Participants began at very different places and grew in unique ways. It is fair to say, however, that every participant was touched in some way by their two years in NELD.

- \* NELD seminar experiences offered time away from the organization, a place to challenge and broaden perspectives, an exposure to new ideas, a space for thinking, a time for inward examination of personal leadership beliefs and values, a safe learning environment, and an opportunity to heal.

- \* The seminars were, at the same time, invigorating and exhausting. The exhaustion came, not from being overwhelmed with information, but from being challenged to make personal meaning out of the ideas and feelings stimulated by the seminars.

- \* Deepening their reflective capacities was, for many interns, the most significant aspect of their NELD experience.

- \* The seminars offered a safe learning space where emotion and intellect blended.

- \* Feelings shared by interns and others ranged from anger, confusion, and sadness to exhilaration, freedom and confidence.

- \* For many, their understanding of the human dimensions of leadership was enhanced.

- \* People saw the value and power in moving beyond only academic approaches to leadership development. For example, the Indian Reservation visited had traditionally been matriarchal. The older women offered different perspectives on leadership.

- \* For some, the experiential and transformative processes provided as much learning as the seminar content. Teaching assumptions like "we are all teachers, all learners" became real.

- \* Deep and lasting friendships formed among many participants.

- \* In completing the seminar series, interns spoke of the loss of their times together--in community. They talked of the challenge to continue the relationships beyond the seminars.

- \* Many felt heightened awareness of people's differing perspectives, particularly on gender and power issues.

- \* They wrote of having a greater understanding of the importance of personal and cultural history. For many, the disruption of long-standing beliefs was deeply uncomfortable.

- \* The importance of philosophical congruence between one's own beliefs and values and those of the organization was highlighted.

- \* On leadership style, an intern said, "I'm becoming more like a helicopter than an automobile--I hover above things and don't need to be in the middle or in control and driving everything."

- \* On interpersonal relationships, interns reported learning to appreciate the little things in life and to have more fun. Some said they were easier to work with, less reactive, more concerned about people, and working toward a better work-family balance.

- \* Interns reported extending personal learning to their family life. For some, this led to more openness, improved communication, greater



closeness, and a heightened concern for family relationships. Others reported strained family relationships and an exacerbation of existing family problems.

- \* Some interns were alienated from their colleagues and organizations while participating in NELD.

- \* There was time to think and write about feelings and instincts. \* People spoke of discovering and reclaiming missing parts of themselves as humans.

- \* Interns mentioned working toward being grounded in a clarified personal value system and an expressed philosophy.

- \* For some, the self-developed learning was a chance to regain the joy of learning lost on the path to formal education.

- \* For others, developing their own learning was an ordeal.

- \* The times between seminars offered space to apply ideas from NELD and to test those ideas in practice.

- \* One intern described Extension professionals as "human doings, not human beings." Interns spoke of moving from continually acting to taking time for reflecting on their actions.

- \* The need to become whole people--whole in mind, body, and spirit--was a theme in NELD. Interns wrote of seeking to better understand their emotional and spiritual natures.

- \* New behaviors were reported by NELD interns, including increased reading time, more attention to reflection, greater sharing of leadership responsibilities, seeking to empower others, exploring alternative leadership styles, expressing value basis for decisions, sharing NELD learning with others, listening actively, being more open with others, seeking feedback, better balancing work and family, and seeking better physical health.

#### PROGRAM EVOLUTION:

- \* Reflection was the keyword in seminar planning and implementation; fine-tuning and adjustment were continuous; program development processes were highly formative and dynamic.

- \* Balancing new topics/presenters with the time needed to reflect on the personal meaning of the learning was an ongoing tension.

- \* Seminars were held in relatively remote and beautiful settings, when consistent with the seminar themes, to encourage time and place for thoughtfulness, to build group trust and camaraderie, and to distance participants from job pressures.

- \* The lines of polarization blurred. Regarding teaching and learning. Everyone associated with NELD taught at times and learned at times. Directed and self-developed learning overlapped so that parts of the structured seminars were self-developed and parts of the self-developed learning was conducted within frameworks suggested by the NELD staff. The separation between reflection and action became porous as people reflected while acting and acted while reflecting.

- \* Evaluation (during and between seminars) was reconfigured as teaching: as fostering the development of critical reflection capacity and as making meaning from experience.

- \* Curricular decisions in the diversity and international seminars were shared with key people living in the cultures. This led to less control and caused logistical problems, but also provided seminars that were more sensitive and honest to the culture. The seminars were less efficient and more effective.

- \* In honoring the NELD assumption that people need to seek less separation between work and life, companions and children were

included in several seminars.

- \* Tension developed between the university procurement system and NELD. Educational assumptions on content, process, and curriculum differed. It required extra effort to ensure that program, rather than budget, drove NELD.

#### RIPPLE EFFECTS:

- \* Early on, interns were cautious about expressing new ideas and colleagues noticed few visible changes. Over time, colleagues reported changes, including enhancing priority setting, asking different types of questions, raising new issues, showing increased confidence, using humor purposefully, more tempered in expressing opinions, taking initiative to look outside the organization, increasing self-expectations, more flexible, less blaming of others, changing perspectives, and more reflective.

- \* People on the periphery of the NELD intern program--presenters, host families, NELD Advisors, National Advisory Committee members, colleagues, hotel and conference center staffs, and the companions and children of NELD interns--reported learning from the content and processes of NELD.

- \* Increasingly, opportunities were provided for everyone involved in NELD to talk about their learning and feelings.

#### STAFF PERCEPTIONS:

- \* The NELD office was operated as a laboratory for the ideas being advocated in the program. It became a learning organization, experiencing cycles of reflection and action.

- \* Staff members spoke of taking more risks, working as a learning team, feeling intense emotions, and gaining comfort with ambiguity and turbulence through participating in NELD.

- \* NELD staff members came with unexamined expectations, which led to surprises, such as: the wide range of people's reactions to the program, the difficulty many had with self-developed learning, the increased value placed on reflection, the struggle with group development, the lack of challenge to NELD ideas and educational approaches, and the variety of expectations each group of interns brought to the program.

- \* Staff provided mechanisms for the interns to share their intellectual, emotional and spiritual learning. Unknowingly, the same opportunity was not provided to hear the participant's reactions to staff roles, interactions, and ways of operating.

- \* The design of NELD heightened the paradox of controlling curriculum in seminars and of challenging people to take responsibility for their own learning outside the seminars.

- \* Early, staff roles were divided along program and evaluation lines. Efforts to integrate roles was an ongoing challenge.

#### SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE:

- \* The central theme for all the components of the NELD Program was to rediscover the outreach mission in the public universities.

- \* Decisions on curriculum, such as including diversity and international perspectives in programs, were value based choices.

- \* Significant effort was made to ensure that the intern classes were diverse by race, gender, geography, and occupation.

- \* At the end of three years, an outside observer stated that NELD had had more real impact on diversity in the Cooperative Extension System



than he had been able to accomplish in years of diversity work within the organization.

\* Staff agreed that future versions of the seminars should include conscious attention to environmental as well as social, political, and economic issues. These issues were purposefully addressed in the diversity and international seminars--in rural Alabama, on the Reservation, and in Mexico.

\* Throughout the program, the staff had lengthy discussions about the ethical obligations educators have in developing and offering transformative educational opportunities. No one spoke to this issue in the evaluations, although we were aware, informally, that several people sought outside help in dealing with personal issues raised by the seminars and that 10% of the interns were divorced during the three years of NELD. We were left with questions about whether the personal impacts of transformative education should be the educator's concern.

#### CONCLUSION

The evaluation continues. Many of the impacts from NELD will not be known for years, if ever. By design, NELD had different meaning for each participant and in each institution. The program provided challenges, raised questions, built community, and expanded leadership capacities. Learners were always asked, however, what does your learning mean to you? What does your learning mean for your organization? Leadership in NELD is a chameleon. The program had a distinctive shape, but the colors and actions change with each person and in each context.

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## TOWARD A SOCIOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS: THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE HYPOTHESIS

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**Abstract:** This study brings an interdisciplinary approach to the study of participation in adult education programs through the reconstruction of the sociological concept "personal influence." This approach holds important implications for issues surrounding recruitment, retention, and instruction of the adult learner.

### Introduction

Membership in voluntary associations and participation in adult education programs have long been recognized by researchers in the fields of Adult Education and Sociology as closely related forms of participatory behavior (see Courtney, 1992). This inquiry investigates the potential of this relationship for the study of participation in adult education programs through the reformulation of a sociological construct called personal influence. It is argued that personal influence in the form of face-to-face interaction with primary and secondary influentials is at the heart of recruitment strategies targeted at adults, is often an important component of an adult's decision to participate in formally organized learning activities, and may play a critical role in retention and instruction of the adult learner. Secondary analysis of research on voluntary associations, social movement organizations, and adult education programs, together with data on two populations of adult learners from a large scale study of Adult Basic Education (ABE) participants, serves as the basis for our argument and underscores the importance of personal influence for explaining the entire spectrum of participatory action and interaction.

### The Reconstruction of the Personal Influence Hypothesis

Early sociological research on personal influence emphasized the importance of personal contact on opinion formation and decision making over a wide variety of phenomena including voting behavior, consumer behavior, the adoption of agricultural innovations, and the diffusion of new drugs among doctors. Whereas many of these researchers framed personal influence within the primary group, others focused on a broader range of social interactions. Following Merton (1957), who stressed the importance of all forms of face-to-face contact on the "future behavior of the participants" (p. 415), Booth (1966) viewed personal influence as: *a relationship involving two or more persons in a social system where communication occurs in a face-to-face exchange which results in changed*

*behavior on the part of the receiver* (1966: 2; emphasis added). This definition is utilized in this inquiry because it allows for a more thorough analysis of the effect of personal contact on participatory behavior by considering interactions between primary group members and other individuals. Reflective of the traditional sociological distinction between primary and secondary groups, we have divided individuals who exert personal influence on others as primary and secondary influentials to denote the nature of the relationship with those whom they influence. Primary influentials are considered to be family members, friends, co-workers, and others who are bound emotionally to each other and who share significant aspects of their lives. In contrast, secondary influentials include individuals such as educators, ministers, community organizers, employers, and others who are acting in an institutionally defined capacity.

### **Personal Influence and Social Participation**

In an extension of the early work on personal influence mentioned above, several researchers applied this concept to the study of a wide range of voluntary associations focusing on the decision to participate in these organizations. In all organizations studied, personal influence was the factor most often cited by joiners in their decisions to affiliate (Sills, 1957; Babchuk and Gordon, 1962; Booth and Babchuk, 1969; Kobberdahl, 1970). Our reanalysis of these data also reveals that primary influentials accounted for 50 to 85 percent of all memberships while secondary influentials were responsible for an additional four to 38 percent. Regardless of organization, primary influentials exerted a greater impact on affiliatory behavior than did secondary influentials.

Reanalysis of data associated with involvement in social movement organizations in the form of unorthodox religious groups further illustrates the importance of primary and secondary influentials on attracting new members and maintaining their support, and provides evidence that the impact of these two types of influentials can vary dramatically across organizations and settings. Gerlach and Hine (1970), Harrison (1974), and Bibby and Brinkerhoff (1983), found that personal influence was the most important factor underlying religious conversion into Pentecostal and evangelistic churches with primary influentials playing a far more significant role than other individuals in the recruitment process. Conversely, among the Hare Krishna, Snow et al. (1980) found that secondary influentials were responsible for the vast majority of memberships because this group stressed the absence of countervailing social networks and the severance of extramovement relationships. On this basis, Snow et al. (1980) concluded that type of organization may determine whether primary group members or other individuals exert relatively more influence on the recruitment process.

### **Personal Influence and Participation in Adult Education**

Our conceptualization of personal influence serves as a useful overarching construct for not only categorizing previous studies dealing with face-to-face interaction in voluntary groups and social movement organizations, but for the analysis of key aspects of participatory behavior in adult education as well. An examination of this literature reveals that face-to-face contact or word-of-mouth influence has been viewed as the pre-eminent means by which adults become aware of educational programs, and as a critical component of their decisions to participate in these programs. It has also been singled out by other researchers as a mainstream recruitment strategy effective in programs targeted at adults.

For example, Damon (1960) reported that word-of-mouth was the single most cited source of obtaining information regarding adult education programs among 2,591 participants in 28 locations throughout California. Kobberdahl (1970), found that 47 percent of participants in an ABE program reported initially becoming aware of this program through direct personal contact with friends and family while an additional 33 percent became aware of this program through personal interaction with employers and teachers. In a study which specifically examined the effects of personal influence on an individual's decision to participate in adult education programs, Booth and Knox (1967) found that personal sources were more important than mass-media forms in the decision-making process. Snyder (1971) reported that personal contact was instrumental in the decision to enroll in ABE programs for 90 percent of the participants in the Appalachian Adult Education Project. Forty-six percent became involved as a result of direct personal contact with recruiters, 19 percent through interactions with friends and family, and 25 percent as a result of personal contact with other sources.

The findings reported here receive additional support from research conducted at our institution. As part of a larger ongoing study of retention in a midwestern community college ABE/GED program ("The Retention Project") from 1988-1990, 2295 participants were asked how they became aware of the program (Dirkx and Jha, 1991). The most frequently cited means was through contact with friends (46 percent). The next four most cited categories, high school or college counselor, educational institution (referring to other personnel connected with the program), instructor, and contacts with agency personnel accounted for an additional 47 percent of the responses. Taken together, personal influence accounted for 93 percent of the participants' responses.

During a more recent phase of the Retention Project, students were again asked how they learned about the ABE/GED program. Forty-six percent of the 125 participants became aware of the program through interaction with friends and family. The second, third, and fifth most cited



categories were high school or college counselor, agency personnel, and instructor, which account for an additional 42 percent. Therefore, personal influence was the means by which the overwhelming majority of participants (87 percent) became aware of the program.

### **Personal Influence and the Participatory Cycle**

We view participation in adult education programs as a series of actions and interactions, which constitute what we refer to as a "participatory cycle." A participatory cycle is a dynamic process which is set into motion when an individual becomes aware of an adult education program and begins to translate this knowledge into participatory action. Operationally, it ends with the individual's decision to terminate his or her involvement with the program. The findings presented thus far underscore the importance of personal influence as means by which individuals become aware of adult education programs, its centrality to the recruitment process, and its role as a mediating variable in the individual's decision to enroll in these programs. Given its significance in these initial stages of participation, it seems likely that personal influence would also be significant throughout the duration of the participatory cycle. Whereas surprisingly few researchers have examined this phenomenon, several studies provide preliminary support for the thesis that personal influence is critical to the understanding of the entire range of participatory action. Darkenwald and Gavin (1987) and Balmuth (1988), for example, emphasize the importance of the social environment on persistence in ABE programs. These findings are consistent with our own research which indicates that personal influence factors differentially affect participatory outcomes.

### **Primary and Secondary Influentials**

Analysis of the Kobberdahl (1970) and Snyder (1971) data on ABE participants and the data on two populations of ABE students in the Retention Project, provide the opportunity to further stress the importance of personal influence on participation in adult education programs and document the relative importance of primary and secondary influentials on this process. Kobberdahl found that 47 percent of the participants became aware of the program through primary group contacts, while 46 percent in each of the two samples of the Retention Project also learned of the program through interactions with primary influentials. Secondary influentials accounted for 33 percent of the responses in the Kobberdahl study and 47 and 42 percent of the two populations of adult learners in the Retention Project. These data stand in marked contrast to the findings of the Appalachian Adult Education Project in which only 19 percent of the participants enrolled in ABE programs as a result of interactions with primary influentials, while an additional 71 percent became involved

through face-to-face contact with secondary influentials. These findings emphasize the need to critically examine the differential impact of primary and secondary influentials on participation in adult education programs. We suspect that primary and secondary influentials occupy different niches in the participant's orbit of influence and that their respective roles can have dramatic consequences for understanding the participant's behavior and the choices he or she makes.

### Conclusion

Through the reconstruction of personal influence and the subsequent reinterpretation of a wide range of data on voluntary associations, social movement organizations, and adult education programs, we have argued that personal influence is an underlying theme which is central to the understanding of participatory phenomena in general and adult education programs in specific. We have argued that personal influence is an important aspect of recruitment strategies targeted at adults across organizations, settings, and in consideration of diverse populations of adult learners. Moreover, we have suggested that it is also a critical component of an adult's decision to participate in adult education programs and, in all likelihood, acts as an important mediating variable throughout the entire range of participatory action and interaction. This approach may hold profound implications for the field of Adult Education because it offers an explanation of one of the mechanisms which can contribute to increased participation among adults in organized forms of learning and which may prove to be particularly effective for recruitment of members of groups which have traditionally been underrepresented in adult education programs. This research also suggests a link between the new social movements related to adult education and advances our understanding of other issues critical to the study of participatory behavior.

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## **RACE, GENDER, AND THE POLITICS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION**

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**Abstract:** Societal patterns of racism and sexism are played out in the professionalization of adult education.

The professionalization of adult education is taking place in a society in which social power is distributed along many dimensions. A recognition of such a power distribution is essential for understanding why and how the power relationships in the professionalization process are organized and maintained. The purpose of this paper is to examine how social practices based on interlocking systems of racism and sexism are maintained in the professionalization of adult education.

### **Professionalization and Adult Education**

Given the variety of definitions of professionalization, it is important that we specify how we are to understand this concept in its relation to adult education. For our analysis we turn to the writings of sociological theorists (Friedson, 1986; Larson, 1977) who show that the modern movements towards professionalization have been linked to the rise of industrial capitalism in the mid-1800s. Within this emergent social order, occupations had to create a market for their services and claim special privileges for their members. Importantly, then, the unit of analysis in this chapter is the occupation of adult education because individuals don't professionalize, occupations do. Although individuals carry out the professionalization process, they always act within pre-given institutional and social relations of power. Because power, individual and social well-being, and economic rewards are unequally distributed in the larger society along race and gender lines, it is unsurprising that the same inequalities are reproduced by the professionalization of adult education. Our central argument is that the societal patterns of racism and sexism (as well as challenges to such patterns) are going to be enacted in the professionalization of adult education because the patterns in both spheres (society and occupation) are constructed by the same people, institutions, and practices.

We must first ask where these patterns of racism and sexism are manifested in the professionalization process. To answer this, we turn to Larson (1977) who argues that professionalization is the process by which producers of special services (e.g., adult education) seek to constitute and control the market for their services. For this professional market to exist, a distinctive commodity must be produced. Unlike industrial labor, most professions produce intangible goods in that their products are inextricably bound to the persons who produce them. It follows, then, that the producers themselves (e.g., adult educators) have to be produced if their products are to be given a distinctive form. In other words, professionals must be adequately trained and socialized so as to provide recognizably distinct services on the professional market. In order to provide this distinct service, the profession must have a recognizably distinct and standardized knowledge base that is taught to its new members. All of this comes together in higher education where the production of knowledge and the production of practitioners are united in the same structure. That is, the model of research and training institutionalized by the modern university gives to professions the means to control their knowledge base and to award credentials certifying that the practitioner possesses this recognizably distinct type of knowledge. The achievement of any profession's socially recognized expertise is therefore necessarily connected to a system of

education and credentialing.

Based on this analysis, we can say that adult education began to professionalize nearly 60 years ago with the establishment of degree programs in universities. As with any profession, the field's level of professionalization can be assessed by the extent to which its credentials are accepted as necessary to provide a specific type of service. As explained by Larson (1977), marketable expertise is a crucial element in the structural distribution of social power, and professionalization is an attempt to translate one order of scarce resources (special knowledge and skill) into another (social and economic rewards). This direct connection of professionalization to the structure of modern inequality explains why the patterns of discrimination based on race and gender that we see in all other areas of society also characterize the professionalization of adult education. Professionalization is simply another mechanism by which social power is distributed in society and all of the existing asymmetrical power relationships among different races and between men and women are reproduced (often in complex and subtle ways) through this process. The reproduction of existing asymmetrical power relations is done in a variety of ways where adult educators work, in how they organize themselves in professional associations, and in how they are educated and credentialed. Although these three sites (the workplace, associations, higher education) are important in the professionalization process, we have chosen to focus this chapter on the ways that racism and sexism are manifested in the education and credentialing activities of higher education. We have done this because of the overwhelming evidence that the mechanism for knowledge production and training that occurs in universities is the linchpin of the professionalization process. That is, it is necessary to consider how power relations are being largely reproduced in the higher education process in order to understand how power relations (particularly those based on race, gender, or both race and gender) are largely reproduced in the professionalization of the field.

The issues of who has the power to determine what counts as knowledge is extremely important to understanding professionalization in adult education. It is clear that for the most part, faculty members in higher education settings, particularly at the graduate level, who serve as both teachers and researchers, have been given the power to serve both as the producers and disseminators of knowledge. They produce knowledge in their research pursuits; they also determine what research is "good" and what research and literature base is to be published, disseminated, and included in the curriculum. Minnich (1991, p. 161) notes: "like power, knowledge depends on the agreement of a significant group of people and establishes itself more firmly as their organization grows. And when that organization is of professionals whose knowledge is itself high in the hierarchy, power takes on the further mantle of authority. In such organizations, it is not at all surprising that the articulated hierarchy of 'kinds' of people is also replicated." In the following section, then, we discuss three central ways that racism and sexism are maintained in the professionalization process: who the people are on adult education faculties, the relationship between who they are and the kind of knowledge that they produce and disseminate through the curriculum, and the ways that interpersonal interactions are structured.

### **Manifestations of Racism and Sexism in Professionalization**

As we have argued in the previous section, the process by which the structured power relations of society are reproduced is the same regardless of whether one is talking about relations based on race, or class, or gender, or ethnicity, or any other system of structured

privilege or oppression. However, these relations are manifested in somewhat different ways in the professionalization process and so we discuss them separately below; in particular we focus on how racism and sexism affects African-Americans and women.

### **Racism in Adult Education**

**Faculty.** The first way that racism is manifested in professionalization is in the composition of the faculty of graduate programs. Those who are professors in higher education, those who have been given the power to produce and disseminate knowledge, still in 1993 are almost exclusively white. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1992), in 1987 when considering the composition of the full-time faculty at public institutions offering doctoral degrees in all fields, 91% were white, and only 1.8% were African-American. Clearly then, it is those who are members of the white hegemonic culture that have the power to create and disseminate knowledge. When examining the current listing of the Commission of Professors in Adult Education, we found that of the 186 people listed, 178 (95%) were white. Consequently, those who determine what knowledge is produced, what counts as true knowledge, and what will be included in the curriculum as necessary professional knowledge are still almost exclusively white. Because faculty members are in the business of credentialing adult educators by conferring master's and doctoral degrees, faculty members who are of the profile noted above serve as the gatekeepers of the professionalization process. Given the low representation of African-Americans who are professors in the field, we can safely say that African-Americans have not had much power to serve as either the producers of or the disseminators of knowledge in the field.

While this may be changing somewhat, it is not changing very quickly. At the University of Georgia, there are 107 currently enrolled graduate students in the Department of Adult Education. Only eight (approximately 8%) are African-American. While we do not have access to the racial breakdown of student enrollment in other graduate programs in adult education, we don't have any reason to suspect that most other programs are vastly different in this respect. Thus, given the racial breakdown pool of graduate students from which future faculty members will be drawn, it is likely that the racial composition of the adult education professorate will change only very slowly. The overwhelmingly white and largely male representation on faculties of adult education is not surprising since one recognizes that it is those who are largely white and male that are sponsored throughout the educational system by being offered more classroom attention, more positive reinforcement, a curriculum that offers likely access to higher education and thus potential earning power, and a greater number of role models and mentors from similar backgrounds (The AAUW Report, 1992). Another factor influencing the composition of faculty in higher education is the effect of the mentoring process in the placement and recruiting of new faculty. African Americans are not sufficiently brought into academia because they are not adequately mentored by white males (the power brokers of higher education). Moses (1989) cites the lack of mentoring as an important factor barring African American women from the campus network that aids in academic success.

**Curriculum.** Another way that racism is propagated through higher education becomes evident in an examination of the curriculum. What gets taught, what has counted as true knowledge, throughout the entire educational system, has generally represented a white worldview. The works of African-Americans are largely excluded from the canon. This strategy keeps the educational process both elitist and homogenous. Freyberg (1993) sees



this exclusion as the means the system uses to safeguard its knowledge. She describes the process as a "hall of mirrors...which reproduces and authenticates its own legitimacy by drawing upon the same terms it seeks to prove" (p. 59). She explains that such an illusionary process creates a false center and a resulting "imperialist infrastructure" that uses a "divide and conquer" strategy to keep its power. Integration of the curriculum is also cited as a subtle means of reproducing the canon. This method is manifested in several ways. Departments can create special courses whose titles include "ethnic" or "black" or books by and about African-Americans can be added to the curriculum. However, such strategies do not change the core curriculum but merely reinforce the identity of the new as "other" (Farmer, 1993; James, 1993). Farmer (1993) disparages the approach for giving "place but not importance." In addition, integration is seen as a way of protecting the sacredness of the canon. McCarthy (1990) refers to it as a truce devised to stop disapproval of "assimilationist curriculum models." Given the almost exclusively white composition of adult education faculties who have historically determined what counts as true knowledge it is not surprising that curricula in adult education has generally represented a white worldview, and "nonwhite racial groups in the United States are rarely mentioned as the creators of concepts or ideas, or as the producers of curricula" (Colin and Preciphs, 1991, p. 65). The fact that the contributions of the African-American community are rarely mentioned in the adult education literature, suggests that such contributions have not been valued enough to include in the literature (Colin and Preciphs, 1991). But when African-Americans appear in the literature they are not noted as such. Therefore, their contributions are decolorized and assumed to be contributed by whites.

**Interactions among Faculty and Students.** A third way that racism is maintained in the professionalization process is through the structured interaction among students and faculty. Stereotypes are major supports of racist practices (Reyes and Halcon, 1990) and are operative both in higher education and in the culture at large. According to Warren, "they operate as tacit knowledge that influences conscious and unconscious bias" (1993, p. 100). These convenient ways of classifying the unknown and unfamiliar lead to many of the problems cited by minority students and faculty. African-American students say that when they are recognized as exhibiting intelligence and competence they are seen as unique among African-American students rather than as the rule. As regards professors, minority faculty report that they are expected to be the caretakers of other minority students and faculty in addition to their routine duties of research and teaching. Such expectations are made without compensation or credit. Reyes and Halcon (1990) argue that minority faculty should be credited and recognized for their special contributions. Specifically they recommend that a value be assigned to "ethnic perspective, cultural knowledge, diversity of ethnic mix in the network of people, and the power to attract other minority students into higher education" (p. 82). Moses (1989) and James (1993) acknowledge that minorities are expected to perform these extra duties only in reference to other minorities. Yet, rarely are they considered to be automatically competent to perform counseling and support functions for non-minority students or faculty (Moses, 1989). With this prevailing attitude such extra services are not recognized as enhancing one's administrative ability.

### **Sexism in Adult Education**

**Faculty.** There is evidence of adult education's role in the reproduction of power relations based on gender in who serves as the producers and disseminators of knowledge in



the field--namely adult education faculty members. When we examined the current list of the Commission of Professors in Adult Education, we found that of the 186 listed 59 (32%) were women. This is an improvement over higher education circles in general. In 1987, the composition of the full-time teaching faculty at all public institutions in the United States offering doctoral degrees across all disciplines was only 25% female (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). But given the fact that the vast majority of graduate students in adult education are female, faculties of adult education are not as progressive with regards to gender as they may first appear. At the University of Georgia, women make up 62% of the currently enrolled graduate students and 33% of the faculty in adult education. While it may be true that more and more women are being hired in faculty positions in the field, women's presence on university faculties in adult education is certainly not proportional to their presence in graduate programs, or to the number of women receiving doctoral degrees in the field. In sum, it appears that approximately two thirds of those receiving doctoral degrees in the field are women (assuming the University of Georgia is representative), while approximately two thirds of those with faculty positions in the field are men. Perhaps one may argue that this is due to the fact that change is slow, and older male faculty have not yet retired to make their positions available. This is perhaps somewhat true, but still, there appears to be a leak in the pipeline.

**Curriculum.** The reproduction of power relations based on gender is also played out in what is often chosen as the required curriculum in graduate programs in adult education. Required courses usually include works of "eminent" adult educators such as Knowles, Freire, Mezirow and others, mostly white males. While more and more graduate programs in adult education are offering courses dealing with the interlocking systems of gender and race privilege and oppression, such courses are generally not required and thus are given marginal status in the field. Thus in the overt curriculum (the "official" course content) of adult education, the works and values of white uppermiddle-class males are given the greatest credence as the producers and disseminators of knowledge in the field. In general, feminist criticism has also been lacking in the adult education literature (Collard and Stalker, 1991). While this appears to be changing given the more recent publications that deal with feminist issues, few women (relative to men) have been historically recognized as contributing to the knowledge base of adult education (Hayes, 1992). Much of the literature that does exist dealing with women tends to portray them in non-authoritative roles (Collard and Stalker, 1991). In light of the overall lack of attention to feminist theory, the subordination of women has been inadvertently reinforced in the adult education literature, and thus in adult education curricula in higher education.

**Interactions among Faculty and Students.** This attitude of the greater valuing of white male knowledge continues to be propagated in the hidden curriculum (what is taught in unconscious ways) as well--in the examples used, in the power dynamics that often emerge in adult education classrooms, and by what often happens in the mentoring process. As has been discussed elsewhere (Tisdell, 1993), in small group exercises in adult education classes white males are most often chosen by the members of their small group to be spokespersons, reporters, or leaders of their groups despite the fact that very often the female to male ratio in such classes is three to one. It is not necessarily that the white males in such groups consciously "take over" and the females consciously and dutifully acquiesce. Rather, these familiar dynamics are played out everywhere and rooted in our very socialization in American culture. After all, most women of every race are used to having white males in

leadership roles, are used to listening to the authority of their deeper voices and seemingly more cogent ways of speaking. And white men are generally used to being paid attention to, being deferred to by others, and are used to speaking out in formal and informal public situations (Renzetti and Curran, 1992). So it is quite natural for white males to be given more attention and more authority by both their peers, and perhaps their teachers as well. While we may intellectually believe in the equality of women, African-Americans, and those otherwise marginalized in our culture, we have been socialized into various and unconscious patterns of relating that generally support white male dominance in spite of what our professed beliefs might be. These unconscious patterns of relating are generally evident in adult education classrooms (Tisdell, 1993), and to the extent that they go uncriticized by professors and students as power dynamics emerge in classrooms, they are reinforced in the professionalization process of adult education.

The fact that adult education faculties are still approximately two thirds male despite the fact that nearly two thirds of the doctoral degrees go to women in the field may be due in part to the fact that in almost all fields white males are better mentored than women (Grant & Ward, 1992). Because of internalized patterns of deference women may be less likely to be as proactive as their white male peers in asking for help or directly seeking out mentoring, assuming that professors are too busy, or not interested in helping them (Sadker and Sadker, 1990). This assumption, along with the fact that women are less experienced in asking for help to begin with than their white male counterparts since it is less acceptable to do so in the wider culture, means that women are often not as well mentored as their white male counterparts. Most professors are more likely to mentor those who are more proactive in seeking it out. This may be further complicated by the uncomfortableness of dealing with the "other" whether the "other" is a woman or a member of another marginalized group. Should we ask or expect students from marginalized groups to answer questions about subject matter particularly relevant to their group? Perhaps we wonder if that will make the student uncomfortable, so many times we are unsure about what to do in the name of sensitivity, and are therefore uncomfortable ourselves. Thus in classes, students may inadvertently avoid dealing with people from marginalized groups, therefore contributing to the reproduction of white middleclass dominance. And it is probably more comfortable for professors, almost all of whom are white, and the vast majority of whom are male, to continue to mentor students who are not "other."

In conclusion, we believe that only by challenging the power relations in graduate programs in adult education can we begin to challenge racism and sexism in the professionalization of adult education. As we have argued, the power relations in higher education, in adult education, and in professionalization reflect the power relations of society. Change is difficult, and the process is slow; but it is not impossible. We believe that racism and sexism will be better addressed in the professionalization of adult education as traditional models of what counts as true knowledge are called into question, as the adult education curriculum reflects more adequately the people and issues it attempts to serve, and as people with feminist and Afrocentric consciousness are more represented on faculties of adult education.

[References will be distributed at the conference]

## ADULT EDUCATION AS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Ian Baptiste

### Abstract

Most adult education programs are wedded to human capital theory, a theory which ignores structural barriers to social equality such as sexism, racism, and classism. Proposed is an alternative, which, in addition to dispensing human capital (marketable skills), seeks to provide opportunities for students to hone the tools needed to overcome the impediments to social equality. I call this type of education: *education as political participation*.

*Where ignorance doth languish, prosperity doth flourish*, may well be the prevailing slogan driving most educational endeavors. Teachers, administrators, parents, even celebrities, encourage youngsters to "just stay in school." Getting their certificates and diplomas (what I call anti-ignorance pills) is supposed to solve all of their economic and social woes. And when the pills are taken, but the maladies persist, more pills are prescribed. These pills are recommended for treating a wide range of pathologies: poverty, income inequality, homelessness, crime, marriage and family crises; racism, sexism, and so on.

In the jargon of the workplace anti-ignorance pills are known as marketable skills or human capital. And "the body of knowledge which seeks to describe, explain and validate [the human capital] phenomenon is called *human capital theory*" (Schultz, 1989, p. 219). The theory is rooted in an individualistic and economic worldview. Ours, apparently, is a world of autonomous, economically-rational beings; individuals whose every efforts are aimed primarily at maximizing their personal well-being (what is referred to as "utility-maximizing behavior", (Becker, 1992, Becker and Tomes, 1986, p. S1, Psacharopoulos, 1988, p. 105), and whose actions, moreover, are largely a function of unmitigated individual choices and preferences (Becker, 1975, Schultz, 1963, p. 64).

In brief, the theory purports that: Humans are, above all things economically rational beings. As such, they would always seek to maximize their economic utility. They would do so by first maximizing investment in their health, education and other areas which would improve their productive capacity. Then they would make every effort to utilize that productive capacity to the fullest extent possible. These efforts are not likely to be thwarted by obstacles such as racism, sexism or classism. Accordingly, every individual would receive returns (earnings) up to the level of her investment and productive capacity. High human capital investors would become high-income earners, and low human capital investors would remain low-income earners.

A logical extension of the foregoing is that what a person turns out to be is largely a product of her abilities (inherited or learned), economic choices, and efforts. One's utility-maximizing nature would render him incapable of acting in ways, except those that would fully exploit his economic potentialities. And an individual's radical autonomy would ensure that her potentialities, choices, and efforts cannot be thwarted, mitigated or



frustrated by others. In short, we are what we freely choose.

In this view social maladies such as poverty, unemployment, and income inequality are regarded as the product of either to natural incapacity or ignorance (illiteracy). People are presumed to be poor, unemployed or underemployed, because they either lack the capacity (intellectual, physical, etc.,) to do better, or because they lack the marketable skills needed to secure high-paying jobs. And since we could do very little to correct natural incapacity, our only solution to poverty, joblessness, and income inequalities would be to provide greater, and more equal, access to marketable skills.

It is true that, on average, persons with more education (defined as marketable skills) earn more than those with less. But one must be careful not to jump to the hurried conclusion that their greater earnings is the result of their greater skills or greater productivity.<sup>1</sup> After all, if that conclusion were true, how does one explain the fact that women (with the same level of skills as men) still earn less, or the higher unemployment and lower earnings of black college graduates in the United States vis-a-vis their white counterparts. Also, how does one explain the fact that the minimum entry qualification for the same occupation varies so widely with locality; that the average college graduate living in Chicago, earns more than his counterpart in Appalachia, or that quite a lot of uneducated folks (with little human capital) earn so much? How does one account for the lower wages of the Trinidadian college graduate relative to her American counterpart, or the higher wages of the Trinidadian college graduate relative to his Jamaican counterpart (Karabel and Halsey, 1977; and Thurow, 1982 and 1983; World Bank: World Development Reports, 1984 to 1993)?

Human capital theory can in no way explain these empirical discrepancies. This is because social maladies such as poverty, joblessness, and income inequalities are as much the product of injustice as they are of illiteracy. People are poor, not necessarily because they don't work, or don't work hard. On the contrary, most poor people work. Moreover, they are quite often more productive than their higher-earning counterparts. Their low income is as much (or even more so) a function of such structural barriers such as a limited number of good jobs, racism, classism, sexism, or ageism, to name a few, as it is of any marketable skills deficiencies.

And merely improving their marketable skills will not remove these barriers. More, and higher-paying, jobs do not necessarily come about because people gain more marketable skills. If anything, the same limited number of good jobs must now be sought after by a greater number of "qualified" persons -- a quite favorable prospect for employers. And I fail to see how improving one's marketable skills can remove the race, gender and class discriminations that still plague our societies (Armitage and Sabot, 1987; Blau and Ferber, 1987; Cannings, 1988; Cotton, 1988; Farley, 1987; Gannicott, 1988, Human and Greenacre, 1987; Miller, 1987; Montgomery and Wascher, 1987, Leonard, 1987; Lommerud, 1987; Raymond et. al., 1988; Shapiro and Stelcner, 1987; Shulman, 1987).

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Blaug (1970), (1976) or Maglen (1990).

What the foregoing discussion suggests, is that if, as educators, we intend foster social equality, then we must do more than dispense marketable skills. We must provide opportunities for students to hone the tools necessary to overcome structural inequalities. Such an education would develop students who would be competent not only at producing (and consuming) salable goods and services (economic participation), but also at determining whatever is produced (goods, services, knowledge, technology, etc.), who gets to produce what, and how the products and services are valued and allocated (political participation).

I call such an enterprise: *education as political participation*. But note carefully, I do not mean by political participation, the selfish grabbing after power that is usually associated with "things political." Such a formulation, although quite popular, often denigrates politics to a crude form of economic utilitarianism that is more a vice than a virtue. This view stems from a Hobbesian/Lockean psychology in which humans are by nature materialistic, acquisitive, but economically rational, beasts.

In such a view, there is little virtue in social interaction except the private material benefits it might offer. One engages in the public sphere only for one's material happiness and physical safety. Locke writes: "The great and chief end therefore, of men [sic] uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property... [that is], their lives, liberties, and estates" (Locke, 1947, book ix, para. 123, 124).

The political participation I advocate here is something quite different. It is a view, rooted in the belief that humans are inherently social beings; beings whose full development depends on reciprocal social interaction. In this view, political participation is a continuous process of public, communicative interaction among individuals working towards their mutual development. Political participation so conceived is indispensable to full personal and societal development. It is (according to Aristotle) the primary means by which a person's identity is formed and developed: as she shares in the good of the *polis* (political community), and the political education it provides (Scaff, 1975). And as Rousseau puts it, without political participation statehood or civic society is an impossibility. "As soon as any man says of the affairs of the state, 'What do I care?', the state should be accounted lost" (Rousseau, 1953, p. 103). The political participation of which I speak, then, shapes, defines and develops the individual, and fashions and secures the survival of communities. In short, the ends of such an enterprise are the reciprocal virtues of self-realization and the development of political communities.

Such an enterprise, I believe, holds immense possibilities for breaking down structural barriers which propagate injustices and inequities in the society, for it transforms individual self-interests into public goods. This is not martyrdom. One's self-interest is not sublimated or trampled in the process. Rather it is transformed--incorporated into a larger public interest. Because I realize that my full development depends on the full development of others, I act in ways that would enhance the development of the other.

What does all the above have to do with adult education? Everything! For a careful



analysis of the more prevalent adult education programs reveals that beneath the rhetoric of self-actualization and client satisfaction, most of these programs are geared primarily towards providing individuals with marketable skills intended to fit them into unequal and unjust socio-economic order. Little or no attempt is made in these programs to analyze, critique or transform the existing order. It is taken as pre-given and reified--the product of a technological roller-coaster that is beyond human control. However, what such rhetoric really masks is our complicity with the agenda of the corporate world.

Witness the ascendancy of human resource development (HRD) programs and courses at all levels of the adult education enterprise. But what is HRD but merely an "in vogue" manifestation of human capital theory? Its ultimate goal is neither personal development nor social equality, but organizational profitability. Its mission is to find the most humanistic and efficient methods of getting people to do corporate biddings. In that way we would have fewer disgruntled workers--the poor, but "happy camper." For in the end it cannot be shown that the proliferation of HRD programs has resulted in closing the gap between rich and poor. If anything, it has widened it.

If my analysis is correct, and if adult education wishes to live up to its rhetoric of self-actualization and client satisfaction, it might consider divorcing itself from human capital theory and all its variants. It might better realize its goals if, in addition to preparing students for labor force participation, it also prepared them for political participation.

But what are the basic features of the conception political participation I am advocating? How can it be promoted, and what are some of the obstacles to its realization? I sought answers to these questions in a field research study I conducted in Trinidad, West Indies. Guided by the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and the ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979), data was collected from 15 community development, and community activist, groups throughout the country.

Briefly, my findings coalesced under three broad headings: a) constituents of political participation; b) enablers of political participation; c) barriers to political participation.<sup>2</sup>

The emergent constituents of the political process are: civic action, public agency, and consensual action. A **civic act** is one aimed primarily at fulfilling some public interest; one in which benefits accrue to the community or society as a whole, not merely to private actors. A **public agency** is one whose membership is open to all members of the population whose interest it purports to serve. A **consensual act** is any interaction involving at least two persons capable of speech and action, in which the entire situation (means, ends, etc.,) is wholly and equally negotiable to, and by, all parties concerned.

The emergent enablers of political participation are divided into three categories -- political incentives, political dispositions, and political experiences. The political incentives are: the feeling of satisfaction one gets in being able to help others, and the

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<sup>2</sup> Space does not allow for a thorough explication of these elements. They are explained in much details in my dissertation entitled Taking Charge ... Together: Education as Political Participation (Baptiste, 1994).

opportunity for self-development and self-expression. The political dispositions are: identification with a common humanity, a sense of mission or sacred obligation, and a sense of agency. Political experiences are: civic internships, role-modelling, and socio-political eye-openers.

The major barriers to political participation are: political isolation, that is, lacking exposure to political enablers, a selfish disposition, and an individualistic philosophy.

The definition of political participation which emerged from the study is: Political participation is any, consensual, civic action undertaken through a public agency, for the purpose of promoting self-realization and the development of political community.

I do not claim to have provided an exhaustive list of constituents, enablers, or obstacles to political participation. But I do believe that the elements listed here are crucial to understanding political behavior. As an educator, my goal in seeking to understand political participation, is to apply it in educational practice. I assume that education as political participation is not only possible, but is vastly superior to education as merely economic participation, in promoting social equality. The findings of this study would hopefully augment the knowledge already provided by others writing on the same, or related, subject (See for instance, Cookson, 1986; Freire, 1970, 1973; Walters, 1989). But I believe a lot more empirical work needs to be done to provide the information needed to adequately accomplish the task of making educational institutions truly effective promoters of political participation. For those of us who are committed to this quest, I offer below some questions I believe require our urgent attention. 1) What are the indicators of consensual competence and what specific experiences promote it? 2) Are all forms of civic internships equally politically efficacious? If not, what are the salient feature of the more efficacious ones? 3) How does role modelling contribute to the formation of political participants? 4) Is there a synergistic interaction among various political enablers? Are they equally efficacious? Are some logically prior to others? 5) Does natural endowment predispose one to be or not to be politically active? If so, how does natural endowment and the environment interact in the process?

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## LOOKING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS: HOW THE NATIONAL LITERACY ACT TRANSLATES TO ADULT EDUCATION POLICY AT STATE LEVEL

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**Abstract:** Using the National Literacy Act of 1991 as a reference point, this paper explores the interrelationship between federal and state adult education policy formulation and execution, with particular focus on the dynamics at state level.

**Introduction:** At the time of its passage, the National Literacy Act of 1991 was expected to represent a significant shift in Federal policy focus to include a comprehensive array of new approaches and mechanisms for better integrating delivery of literacy-related services. The Act was heralded as the beginning of a concentrated effort to eradicate illiteracy in America. In addition to creating a National Institute for Literacy, increased emphasis was assigned to adult literacy. A National Center for Adult Literacy was created, and the US Department of Education was thrust into an interdepartmental coordination role. Many other structures and systems distributed over several federal departments were created. The legislation has now been in place for over two years, with much of the ultimate value dependent on the way states, as the locus of public education in America, shape the legislation in implementation.

**Purpose and/or research question:** This research probed the dynamics of how the legislation was brought to passage and how those parts of it specific to adult literacy then found their way into Adult Education policy at state level. Using the Act as a prism, this research set out to determine how Adult Education policies were translated and framed as the Act passed through state level legislative and agency filters.

**Perspective/theoretical framework:** Passage of the National Literacy Act occurred only after extensive negotiation and coordination. A broad network of interested parties was brought together to help leverage passage of the Act, with extensive give and take in arriving at final language in the Act. While there were a number of actors at the seat of government in Washington, the National Coalition for Literacy, a powerful force in assisting with passage of the Act, was characterized by broad-based representation from around the country. Coalition members brought many perspectives to bear on the issues. Among those organizations



represented were the American Bar Association, Public Schools, Correctional Education and Boy Scouts of America, as well as literacy-specific organizations such as Laubach Literacy Action. The *Jump Start Report* (Chisman 1989) figured prominently in drawing attention to the problem associated with Adult Literacy in America.

The study outlined in this paper explored driving forces and constraining forces, as perceived by those who were intimately involved in the process, and went "behind the scenes" to probe the underlying dynamics which led to passage of the Act. Respondents included congressional committee staffers, members of the Executive branch, state level operatives and private sector interest groups.

Methods and/or techniques: Passage of the National Literacy Act was examined in depth, to include genesis, sequence of events, principal actors at various stages of the legislative process and how events interacted to facilitate or delay passage. The Act encountered a number of blockages before ultimately meeting with success.

Rather than rely on the written word alone, key individuals were interviewed on a non-attribution basis. In dealing with the National Literacy Act itself, "scoping interviews" of known participants in the process led to identification of those who were perceived as most knowledgeable and influential in shepherding the Act to passage. While this led to identification of a network of "brokers" largely matching expectations, the preliminary probes also served to identify individuals either within or outside the visible network that would not otherwise have been viewed as key players. This was a salient benefit of the research approach and led to interview of those best able to explain the process leading to passage of the Act.

The policy apparatus for adult education was surveyed in five states: California, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Illinois. Interviews at state level centered on the state director of adult education and four to five supporting players. The data proved to be extremely rich. State director interviews ran over three hours and interviews with other policy stake holders generally lasted over an hour. Ranking instruments were used to gain comparative data on perceived relative priorities across-the-states. Other background information was obtained as well regarding the specific policy structure and expanse of adult education programs in being. In one state a portion of the interview process took the form of a focus group, where three key officials openly shared views and interacted in giving their responses.

Data Source: Government documents, an extensive research base and over 40 in-depth interviews in 1993 and 1994, with an earlier interview set of over 50 leading authorities on adult literacy (1992-1993).

Preliminary Findings:

1. The National Literacy Act has had less impact than many of those who were involved in its passage envisioned. Although the Act authorized creation of structures designed to improve infrastructure, an area of great need, the funds appropriated were insufficient to make a meaningful impact. While the Act has stimulated increased attention to staff development, interagency coordination and knowledge production in many states, without adequate resources targeted to these areas, the attention has been largely symbolic. An associated interview survey of leading authorities on adult literacy in 1992-93 determined that 30 percent of the interviewees found the Act to have high potential, with 14 percent finding the Act to have low potential. Another 34 percent had a qualified view and 22 percent had no real opinion. Latest data tends to show a deepening of pessimism concerning what the Act can be expected to yield in the way of positive outcomes. There is a sense that the National Institute for Literacy remains to establish its role and credibility.

2. There is either no strategic policy for adult literacy in the states surveyed (three of five) or it is haphazard and held hostage by the forces that control it. Lack of role clarity helped contribute to this strategic void. In one state an official said: "Who does what has never been agreed on." No two states are alike.

3. Adult education is the victim of bureaucratic marginality for the most part, either operating at the second or third tier of the state bureaucracy, distanced from the power structure and subject to prioritization of funding that plays out of areas having little to do with education of adults. Adult education policy is frequently smothered and engulfed by considerations specific to K-12.

4. A primary means of working around bureaucratic barriers and zones of indifference is creation of cooperative networks, but this more often than not is personological. Because it is largely predicated on friendship channels and happenstance events, it is also ephemeral. As players change such transitory and thin infrastructure tends to dissolve. The "crazy quilt" pattern of relationships often turns on tactical interests of the moment rather than strategic goals. Such networking tends to operate in an atmosphere of jeopardy, second-class status, fighting up hill for basic funding support and constantly having to jury-rig networks to survive.

5. In general, adult literacy education lacks the resources to significantly serve the public interest. California is a classic case. Even given the magnitude of state level funding for adult education (exceeds over 20 other states combined), it suffers from burgeoning immigration flow (two thirds of the world's immigrants come to the United States, and of those, over one-half go to California) and the government funding cap rooted in passage of Proposition 13 in 1978.
6. The Adult Literacy Act has led to some re-allocations of funding at state level. The staff development provision in Section 353 of the Act has stimulated staff development efforts and since 353 money is not capped, some states are putting more money into infrastructure. One state allocates 25-30 percent of its Adult Education Act (AEA) grant to 353. Specific policies vary. In California, 353 money tends to go for very large development projects.
7. There is a certain frustration by some states in respect to support provided by the US Department of Education to adult education, even though it is recognized that there are some dedicated professionals in that department who strive to do their best in spite of limited funding and overwhelming bureaucratic emphasis on K-12 programs. One state official said: "I have never really received any help from Washington." The frustration stems, in part, from the funding level, even after increases of recent years, provided by the AEA. Some states have funding levels for adult education that far outstrip the federal contribution. This, obviously, influences the extent to which the federal program sways state policy and enjoys credibility.
8. With one exception, state advisory councils have had very little impact in gaining either support or policy focus regarding adult education.
9. The state literacy resource centers have taken varied forms with various outcomes. In some cases, it has led to improved infrastructure and collaboration within a region.

#### Preliminary Conclusions:

1. States studied tend to have three major policy concerns: influencing the higher level policy making systems which have a great degree of control over adult literacy education; acquiring needed resources; and configuring the delivery system to provide higher quality service. These issues touch constraints related to a poor power position in the state bureaucracy, lack

of funding and staff resources, and generally fragmented delivery systems.

2. State policy affects the delivery of adult literacy education to a far greater degree than does federal policy.

3. Each state examined has managed to build some feature within their adult education system that was unique and outstanding. In New Jersey, it was the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and the State Adult Education and Advisory Council that is attached to the SETC. In New York, it was the high degree of inter-system cooperation and the EPI funding. In Massachusetts, it was grass-roots cooperation and the SABES staff development system. In Illinois, it was the leverage that adult literacy had within the legislation. California was distinguished by a carefully considered and inclusive strategic plan that effectively balances some very challenging priorities.

4. California seems to provide an early glimpse of policy considerations that will need to be in mind as we enter the next Century, such as striking the right balance between delivery of services to "new Americans" via English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs and native Americans by Adult Basic Education (ABE). Support of ESL programs in California now consumes 80-90 percent of all federal program money for adult education. Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrants often arrive in California with the address of what are considered the better ESL program sites in hand. Recruiting for ESL programs is much easier than recruiting native Americans who need adult literacy help, a phenomenon not unique to California, but perhaps more pronounced there.

5. Given lean federal resources, it may be appropriate to change the AEA language at time of re-authorization to focus more attention on use of AEA as state policy lever rather than as a funding stream. The implication is that federal policy, as embodied in AEA will have its greatest impact in the extent to which it helps shape state policy.

**Significance:** There has been very little coverage of how state policies are formulated in the area of adult education policy. This lack of knowledge constrains adult literacy educators from developing effective strategies designed to increase resources and to improve the delivery system. There has been very little research in the field of adult education which focuses on how national policy is formulated and its consequences. This is true despite the fact that national policy profoundly affects practice, especially in the field of adult literacy education. This paper represents a



preliminary look at what will be contained in a book to be published by authors of this paper by Krieger, Inc. in 1995. It promises to be a benchmark work on state level policy formulation in the area of adult education programs.

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## CONCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTION IN THE WORKPLACE

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From interviews of twenty-two workplace instructors of adults, three conceptions of instruction emerged: imparting information to learners (Transmission Conception); assisting learners to share ideas and experiences (Enablement Conception); involving learners in the construction of meaning (Constructive Conception). These findings have implications for training instructors of adults and evaluating instruction.

### Introduction

Adult education literature frequently presents the teaching or instruction of adults as either learner-centered or instructor-centered, with the former being preferred (e.g. Knowles, 1980). Recommendations for teaching focus on learners as the most important element in the instructional process and provide suggestions for assuring their inclusion. This centrality of the learner advocated by the literature, raises questions as to whether instructors think of instruction in this way and how they interpret such recommendations. The purpose of the study was to discover how instructors interpret their instructional situation and how they understand teaching or instruction because such understandings are assumed to influence their actions as instructors.

### Setting, Sample and Conceptual Framework

The workplace was chosen as the setting for this study because (1) educational efforts in the form of training and development have greatly increased in recent years (Camevale, 1989); (2) many trainers in the workplace are content proficient but may lack training in instructional skills (Watkins, 1989); and (3) many trainers look to adult education for assistance with their tasks (Brookfield, 1986). The three terms training, instruction and teaching are used here to mean the facilitation of learning.

The research sample consisted of twenty-two members of the Puget Sound Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development located in the Seattle, Washington area. They were volunteer respondents who had instructed other adults in a work-related setting within the year prior to the research. The sample included eighteen women and four men, ranging in age from 22 to 64, with varying levels of education from high school diplomas to doctoral degrees. Most of them had some training in teaching adults and had from one to thirty years experience in instructing adults. There were six external consultants, who contracted to instruct in different work settings, and sixteen internal consultants employed within one organization.

A conceptual framework was devised to summarize the literature and to identify relationships among factors that appeared important to the understanding of thinking about instruction. Adult education research on teaching appeared to focus on six

interacting elements: the (1) instructor and (2) learners relate through the (3) content and (4) processes to bring about (5) learning which may or may not take place within the (6) context, the workplace. This framework was used to guide the development of interview questions and initial data analysis.

### Research Methodology and Design

Phenomenography was chosen as the research methodology because its purpose is to describe "the qualitatively different ways in which people experience... and understand ... the world around them" (Marton, 1986, p. 31). This approach assumes that individuals interpret a situation in relation to its context, and that their actions within that situation are related to the way they make sense of it (Säljö, 1988). The results of such research are conceptions of meaning arranged in an outcome space depicting the variation in meaning. Although the researcher investigates the respondents' conceptions or understandings, the resulting conceptions are constructions of the researcher and are not assumed to be characteristics of any individual respondents (Säljö).

The respondents' understandings of instruction were sought through semi-structured interviews that began by focusing on a recent instructional experience. Units of meaning in the form of quotations from individual respondents were selected from the interview data into a pool of meanings from all the respondents. Conceptions of instruction were derived from the pool of meanings by examining the units of meaning in the context of the individual interview and in the context of all the interviews.

### Findings

Through the process just described, three qualitatively different conceptions of instruction were derived from the interview data. These conceptions are: (1) imparting information to learners who receive and apply it on the job (Transmission Conception); (2) assisting learners to share and apply ideas and experiences (Enablement Conception); and (3) involving learners in an experiential process of constructing meaning (Constructive Conception). Although the interviewer was open to the introduction of elements of instruction other than those of the conceptual framework, nothing emerged that could not be thought of as pertaining to one of the six elements. However, different elements received varying degrees of emphasis.

Table 1 presents a summary of the three conceptions. Across the top of the table are the elements of instruction, and at the left is the global meaning of each conception. Each element of instruction is briefly described as it is understood within the conception, with the element of focus designated by a star.

### Transmission Conception: Imparting Information

In this conception, the focus is on the content which is perceived as an objective, external and authoritative body of information that is to be transmitted to the learners. Instructors are seen as content experts who present information in various ways, usually maintaining primary control over the content and lesser control over the

processes. As presenters of authoritative content, instructors are required to maintain

Table 1

Comparison of Elements of Instruction

|                                                                                  | Instructor                       | Content                          | Processes    | Learners                 | Learning              | Context             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Transmission Conception</u> - imparting information                           | Content expert                   | *Pre-defined body of information | Presentation | Receivers                | Receiving & applying  | Taken for granted   |
| <u>Enablement Conception</u> - facilitating sharing                              | Process facilitator; *non-expert | Common sense                     | Discussion   | *Experts; participants   | Applying              | Taken for granted   |
| <u>Constructive Conception</u> - sharing responsibility for constructing meaning | Partner with learners            | Constructed & construed          | Experiential | Partners with instructor | *Constructing meaning | Impacts instruction |

content expertise. Instructional processes usually consist of various ways of presenting information or of practice exercises that are defined and directed by the instructor. The receptive nature of learning is evident in metaphors depicting information as "sinking in" and "being absorbed." An essential element of this conception is the application of what is learned on the job.

Enablement Conception: Assisting Learners

Learners are the primary element of focus in this conception, and are regarded as important resources. They are viewed as "experts" who possess "common sense" knowledge of the content derived from their personal experiences. It is *their* ideas and experiences that are shared with each other. Classes are designed around the learners' experiences and needs, and their participation is essential. Instructors are thought of not as experts or authorities who give information, but as facilitators who lead the learners primarily in discussion activities. Learning is seen as the application on-the-job of what is received from other learners. This conception is differentiated from the other conceptions by the conviction that learners rather than instructors are the content experts.

Constructive Conception: Constructing Meaning

In this conception, instruction is understood as involving learners in the discovery of meaning. The emphasis is on learning understood as constructing or construing meaning through learning activities in which learners experience the



concepts being taught. Instructors are expected to have content and process expertise, although their proficiency is not assumed to cover all topics. Learners are presumed to have had experiences that at times can be useful as resources for learning, so that instructional and learning roles can be interchangeable between instructor and learners. As partners with the learners, instructors share responsibility for all aspects of the instructional process from goal setting to evaluation. It is believed that meaning is discovered and understanding achieved primarily through experiential activities.

The context is seen as affecting the instructor's ability to instruct, whereas in the other conceptions it appears to be taken for granted. This is also the only conception in which goals were espoused that reached beyond the workplace setting, for example that the content of one's teaching (e.g. personal growth, health issues) can effect the betterment of society.

#### Other Findings

Other findings, also depicted in Table 1, emerged from the data. There is a division between the Transmission and Enablement Conceptions on one hand and the Constructive Conception on the other hand represented in the table by a solid line. In the Transmission and Enablement Conceptions, knowledge is perceived as information that the learners are to acquire and apply in their jobs. There is little evidence that the learners are to understand and give meaning to the information, or at least, the notion of meaning is taken for granted. Whereas in the Constructive Conception, finding meaning in educational experiences is a central concept. The other finding is that the application of new learning on-the-job appears to be an essential component of instruction in the workplace settings of this study, because it emerged as one goal of learning in each conception.

#### Discussion

Similarities were found in the conceptions of this study and conceptions of other comparable studies investigating instructors ways of understanding teaching (e.g Larsson, 1983; Pratt, 1992; Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992). All of these studies yielded an understanding of teaching as imparting information similar to the Transmission Conception. This appears to represent a generic understanding of teaching as delivering a body of knowledge to learners who need to receive it largely as presented. This conception is often assumed to denote training in the workplace as opposed to teaching in academic settings. However, in this research in workplace settings, other conceptions were also found; and in Samuelowicz and Bain's works on academic teachers, imparting information was one of their conceptions. Although other conceptions from different studies have some similar aspects, the unique combination of elements in the conceptions from different studies generated different understandings.

It was evident from this study that thinking about teaching adults cannot be reduced to two dichotomous forms of either collaborative vs. controlled, or teacher-centered vs. learner-centered instruction as is often found in adult education literature

(e.g. Conti, 1979; Knowles, 1980). For example, the involvement of learners advocated in collaborative and learner-centered teaching was interpreted differently in each of the three conceptions. By determining which of the many elements of instruction is the object of focus, a conception that may be construed as teacher-centered because of the control and authority of the instructor, could also be seen as content-centered because that is where the instructor's energies are focused. Although both the Enablement and Constructive Conceptions could be interpreted as being learner-centered, in the Constructive Conception the learners were viewed as partners with the instructor, a quite different interpretation from the Enablement Conception in which learners were experts as opposed to the non-expert instructor. Reducing conceptions of teaching to opposite poles overlooks and diminishes other elements that are important for seeing how individuals relate one element to another to create their own understanding of instruction.

The usefulness of this study is in the tools it has produced and in the contribution it has made to our understanding of instructing adults. The outcome space depicting the variations in conceptions of instruction (Table 1) can be used to study the source of the differences in conceptions among instructors of adults. The conceptual framework derived from the literature can be used in conjunction with the outcome space to design training courses for teachers and trainers. These tools can also be used for instructors to reflect on their own ways of thinking about instruction which is a component of instructional competence (Cervero, 1989; Pratt, 1989).

Another important competency for instructors is knowing how knowledge of the content they are teaching is constructed both by specialists in the field and by those who will be learning it. The topic of teaching or instruction is complicated by the relationship of multiple factors about which there are few well-substantiated theories. Therefore it is important for trainers of instructors to know not only how knowledge about instruction is constructed in the field of education and other relevant fields, but to know that there are alternative ways of conceptualizing instruction among practitioners. For example, recommendations for teaching found in adult education handbooks are seldom contextual, and yet in this study, the context emerged as an important framing factor for instruction. This study also suggests that the recommendation that the instruction of adults should be learner-centered can be interpreted rather naively as indicated by the Enablement Conception. It cannot be concluded that the identical three conceptions found in this study would necessarily be found in other settings, however, it demonstrates that there are variations in thinking about instruction and that instructors cannot assume that they know what those who want to learn to instruct ascribe to terms like "teaching" and "learning."

Teaching or instruction is not "an algorithmic process." It consists rather of "human acts conducted by people who have certain ideas about reality and who are situated in certain realities." Instructors' choices of actions "must be based on profound knowledge of and familiarity with the specific circumstances" of their instructional situation. Knowledge of their own relevancy structures and of alternative ways of construing instruction "should raise the level of awareness in the participants

and in this way indirectly increase the likelihood of better, more considered and open decisions" (Marton & Svensson, 1979, p. 483).

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## Appalachian Women Learning in Community

Mary Beth Bingman

**Abstract:** This paper reviews findings from a study of learning and change in women active in grassroots organizations in rural Appalachia.

In community organizations throughout the mountains people are confronting the problems associated with the Appalachian region - unemployment, limited access to medical care, physical isolation, poverty. As these grassroots organizations struggle to change conditions for people in their communities, the people who are active in the organizations, most of them women, change as well. This research examines how women active in Appalachian community organizations define the impact of their experiences on their lives and learning as adults - what have they learned and how have they changed?

My interest in this topic comes from my experience and ongoing work with Appalachian community organizations and a need to reflect on and understand my experiences. Why is this work sometimes so difficult? What makes people ready to change? How do you build strong grass-roots organizations? How do we in Appalachian communities learn to work together and to understand the forces which continue to buffet our communities? What can we change? From the women I've worked with I have heard stories of strength, hard times, and determination. This research is grounded in the belief that I can learn from these stories, these lives, and that the field of adult education can learn as well.

This study is situated in the literature of adult education and to a lesser extent feminist studies and Appalachian studies. My questions and analysis have been impacted by the work of Mezirow on learning and change in perspective and by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule's (1986) *Women's Ways of Knowing*. Paulo Freire's writing on conscientization, a process which not only involves a changing view of reality but a belief in one's ability to change one's reality, also frames my work as does the work of Hart, Horton, Heany, Clark and others who have built on the work of Mezirow and Freire. I define this work as feminist as well as critical, identifying with Weiler's (1988) characterization of feminist research as rejecting the possibility of impartiality, emphasizing everyday lived experience, and being politically committed.

### Design

This study documents the experiences of women active in two Appalachian community organizations and discovers and analyzes with them what they have learned and how they have changed. The study includes three components. The first consists of life histories of seven women active in two grassroots community organizations in southwest Virginia. These life histories are based on extended interviews with each participant covering family history, education, work experience and work within the organization. A second component is case studies based on participant observation in the two organizations in which the women are active. These case studies provide the context for the study: Why were these groups formed? What do they do? What is the community in which they operate? A third component is



participatory group analysis/discussions with the participants. These group discussions will cover my preliminary conclusions as to the changes that have occurred in the participants' thinking and in their lives. I anticipate the group will deepen my initial analysis with their reactions and reflections. These will be reported in the presentation, but are not complete as the paper is being written.

### **The Organizations and the Communities**

The two organizations in which the women are active call themselves community centers. Both are in coal mining communities. Lee City once was a booming coal town surrounded by smaller coal camps, communities of identical houses built and owned by the coal companies. One of the women told how her mother remembered the town:

*She was talking about the town, you know how the town used to look. She was talking about it was unbelievable. They had like twenty-some different businesses around here, and dance halls and movie theaters, street lights. And you know I thought, "Well gosh, I can't believe that!"*

Today there are only a few hundred people in town and one or two businesses. But community efforts have built a clinic, developed a sewing factory now leased to a private contractor, led to repairs on dozens of houses, and demolished several burnt out buildings. The community center which was started in the mid seventies is in an old store building in the middle of town. The space has been painted and furnished with used furniture including tables and chairs for the adult education and community college classes which meet here. People use the center for parties, baby showers, and meetings. Used clothing donated primarily by churches from outside the area are sold and the proceeds are used to pay upkeep on the building. The staff is all volunteer, though the part time adult education teacher who is an active center board member is paid by the county schools.

The Two Sisters Center is in one of a string of little communities which border the highway in the space left between the mountains and the river. While the mines in Lee City are nearly all closed, Two Sisters is near some of the largest active mines in Virginia. During a recent strike the center served hundreds of meals a day to the strikers and their families. This center, too, is in a former store building. The pre-school program they operate is located in a little house next door. Two Sisters also sells clothing for upkeep money and is the site of county ABE classes, though here the teacher does not live in the community. There are two paid staff, one of whom is the preschool teacher and the other who manages the center. Many members volunteer time. The Center hold dances on Saturday evenings and is a site for SHARE, a national program which enables people to buy a box of food monthly for about thirteen dollars. Center members have recently confronted the local water authority about poor quality and high prices and are organizing to get a sewage system.

Even though the mines near Two Sisters are still operating, both communities are in some of the poorest counties in an impoverished region. Official unemployment runs at over twelve percent and per capita income is \$7837 in one county and \$8067 in the other. Fewer than fifty percent of adults over twenty-five have high school

diplomas. While Lee City has a clinic, Two Sisters is twelve miles on mountain roads from the nearest doctor. Population in both counties is falling as people move away to look for jobs.

### **The Women**

Seven women took part in this study, three from Lee City and four from Two Sisters. These women were identified by the organizations as active members who were willing to take part in this study. They range in age from twenty-two to fifty. All were born in southwest Virginia, six of them coal miners' daughters. Five of their mothers also worked for wages. One is African-American, the rest white. They have a wide range of work experience outside the home including jobs in a sewing factories, restaurants, nursing homes, a chicken plant, and tobacco warehouses. Four have some community college experience; two have not finished high school. Five are currently taking part in formal education, three in community college, two in GED classes. Only two are employed, both part time.

Family is very important to each of these women yet none lives in a "nuclear" (wife, husband, and children) family. All but one has at least one child, none have more than three. Four of them live with their parents or grandparents. One lives with her three teen-aged children. Three are divorced, two never married. Of the two who are married, one has a grown daughter and grandchild living with her and her husband who is disabled. The other has invited her elderly uncle to live with her and husband, a retired miner. All had at least one sibling with an average of five.

These women got involved in community center work for various reasons. Ellen had just left an abusive husband and came to the center looking for help with clothes for her children. She started sitting in on classes, and when she enrolled in college classes started tutoring as a work study student. Karen's good friend who worked at the center encouraged Karen to help when the center was cooking for hundreds of striking miners. Karen helped because her father and brother had been killed in the mines. She and other women at the center encouraged her daughter Tina to volunteer. Susie and Mary both started working in the Lee City center as part of summer employment programs. Grace's sister "kept begging" her to help out. Helen doesn't remember exactly why she started working, but the center is just a few houses down the road from her house, and she enjoys "doing for kids, for old people."

While their level of involvement in the community centers varies, all these women are board members and are involved in other activities. Their work with the centers includes: tutoring, helping with clothes sales, cooking for groups of volunteers, helping to solicit funds and gifts for children at Christmas, cleaning and maintenance of the centers, office work, volunteering in children's programs, staffing dances, and taking part in public forums. They are also part of an informal network of support which the centers provide families in their communities.

### **Findings**

I have used processes of categorization and comparison as described by Goetz and LeCompte (1984) to analyze the data from this study. Many themes have emerged. An ethic of caring within families is part of each woman's life. They have either taken care of grandparents, aunts, uncles, family member's children or have

themselves been "taken in" and cared for when they needed help. All of these women have lived hard times. When she was fifteen Helen left school to care for her younger sisters and brothers and help on the farm after her mother was hospitalized. Karen's father was killed in the mines when she was a child, and she, too, left school to care for younger siblings. Now she faces caring for a disabled husband who has been unable to obtain disability benefits. Mary and Susie both grew up with alcoholic abusive fathers. Ellen and Tina have left abusive husbands and are raising their children as single parents as are Gloria and Susie. Gloria has faced the pressures of integrating an all white school and seeing her sons face racism in the same school twenty years later.

These and other compelling strands run through these lives - the role of religion, the values with which they are raising their children, the importance of this place in their lives and their perceptions of what they have seen of other parts of the United States, what they read and watch on television and why, their marriages and how they view marriage, the manifestations and analysis of racism in Gloria's life, what they say about the effects of gender. These women have given rich data on all these topics. However in this paper I focus on what they say about learning and change in their lives since they have been involved in their community centers.

In these interviews each woman spoke of things they had learned: how to send out fund-raising letters, how to set up an agenda, how to arrange clothing sales and set prices according to what people can pay, how to keep financial records. But the more important learnings, the real changes were in their sense of their own abilities. Five of the seven spoke of feeling stronger, more confident.

*It took me the longest time to figure out that I was smart. And it wasn't just a gradual knowledge that I was intelligent enough to do college work. I was volunteering and I was helping a lady. I was tutoring her in second year college algebra. And I thought to my self, "Hey! I'm smart! If I can do this then I'm an intelligent lady. Cause when I worked it and nobody else could I thought, "I'm not stupid." And it's helped me ever since then. It made me realize that I wasn't stupid, that I could be taught. I could learn. And from then on I've just been learning as much as I have been able to learn.*

*And I guess the community center, they sort of gave me my confidence back, the ladies up here did. They all talked to me and they treated me like an adult, not a little kid which was what my husband was treating me as. Well the ladies up here showed me that was wrong. And they started getting me out more and involving me in more activities and before I knew it I was back to the way I used to be. So I got all my confidence back and it's helped. I do a lot more here than I've done in a long time.*

Three women expressed this in terms of voice:

*I said it's the first time I really would get out and talk cause I was always too bashful. I guess they're the one got me started out not being so bashful talking to people. So it's helped a lot cause I was always a real shy person.*



*Oh, yeah, I talk, yeah, I talk more. I used to be so shy and like... I wouldn't...like right now I can get out and talk to everybody. I feel like I grewed up a lot working up here. And I can communicate better with people and things. I can stand on my own.*

*Cause used to, five or six year ago I wouldn't have spoke out. I wouldn't have been sitting here talking to you in other words. Cause I was just more reserved in my self, my kids, you know, in my own family. You know, you get to meet people and you meet all different kinds of people and I guess it brings, your, what do you say, your insides out? But it was for the good. I feel that it was for the good.*

As they talked about changing it was clear that the support of other women in the center had made the difference. They were involved in new experiences, but with the ongoing support of other women like themselves. Two of the women spoke directly of how they now recognize that ability to support other women in themselves. Ellen told how she had learned to listen from the woman who teaches at Lee City, and how she now listens to abused women who come to the center, recognizing that, "There's no easy answers. And sometimes the only thing you can do is just listen." Susie talked about how she was helped:

*And as far as working in the community center, you get to talk to a lot of people. And you get to find out what they're going through and how they feel. And it's a really big help. I mean you know like someone could come in, and it's just like when I was going through my divorce there was a lady come in here and she had just been through a divorce and we got talking and it helped a lot. I mean people around here are helpful, as far as that goes.*

In a later interview she talked about supporting others. "If they're having a problem, if I've been through it, I'll sit down and discuss it with them and talk to them and hopefully make it easier for them."

While it seems clear that being involved in community center work has led to significant changes in these women's lives, four of them have also recently attended community college which also has some effect. Both Tina and Susie spoke of classes which had impacted their thinking in important ways. Susie took a communications class which helped her understand the failure of her marriage and the impact of her father's drinking on her own sense of herself. She now tries to be sure to talk and listen to her five year old daughter and recognize her daughter's achievements and dreams. Tina was supported by a teacher to use writing to help sort her feelings about her abusive marriage:

*And I learned a lot from my teachers and my counselor. You know they gave me a way to let my emotions out like when I was thinking about what to write and I wrote that paper. My teacher said, "Write something that means something to you or something you really know about, not something that you*



*don't know about." And I learned a lot through that because I could put my feelings on paper and therefore it helped me release them.*

For Tina and Susie college not only offers the possibility of gaining skills which may lead to employment, but has provided transformative experiences. But for Ellen and Mary, college seems only a source of skills. Neither spoke of any significant learning or relationship at college. They both talked of getting their support from other women at the community center. And for Susie, too, her support in the challenge of going to college while raising a young child is her mother and her friend Mary. Only Tina spoke of significant friends met at college.

We can say that these women were empowered by working in community centers. But was this a consciousness raising experience? Do they have new understandings about power relationships? To try to understand this, I asked them about why they believed our area was in such bad economic shape. When I asked them to identify the problems of their communities, they said without exception, lack of jobs. When I asked them why there are so few jobs, their answers were some version of "they" don't bring their businesses into these areas. In these explanations there was some sense of class differences, a belief that somebody else was making the decisions, but it was more bemusement than outrage at historic exploitation. Only Helen, the oldest of the group, seemed to wonder about this region being exploited economically. "But I said, you know, as much coal as went through this county, we could have had anything." More typical was Susie's sense of being forgotten or ignored.

*And I said, I don't know what it is. I don't know why people, big companies and things don't want to come into the areas unless.... I just don't think that this part of southwest Virginia to a lot of people even exists. To me, I think that you know, that we're just a coal camp and nobody cares to really ... Maybe the companies is afraid to start investing, you know, money in places like this. But I mean if people would just realize how many, how many people they are around here and how, you know, how many people that would be willing to get out and work... If they was just jobs for them to get out and work at.*

In grassroots organizations based in community centers these women are confronting the problems in their communities in a holistic, but reactive way. They seem to ask themselves, "What needs doing that we can do?" For the most part they don't worry about underlying causes. At the same time they have developed learning environments that provide support systems for education and change. They value their own growth, their increased willingness to speak. And they demonstrate a belief in the possibility of change in other lives and in their communities.

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## A TOPOGRAPHY OF ADULT EDUCATION THEORY AND RESEARCH

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**Abstract:** Adult education researchers are vulnerable to epistemological fads and bandwagons because they do not have a map of the territory. The map in this paper contrasts functionalism with radical structuralism, interpretivism and radical humanism.

**The Problem:** Adult education draws on many theoretical reservoirs and disciplines and, as such, is curiously vulnerable to nostrums and fads. For example, in the 1950's A-V aids were all the rage, in the 60's it was group discussion, at other times it has been computer-assisted instruction and, more recently "critical reflexivity". There are parallel fads in the research community where an almost total commitment to positivism and statistics has been replaced by an amorphous blend of subjectivist ontology, post modernism and qualitative methodology. Regrettably, those committed to one epistemology, paradigm or methodology often dismiss or discount those with a different orientation. Hence, the critical theorists complain about narrow functionalism and, these days, anyone at AERC committed to human resource development is likely to be condemned as an agent of the military-industrial complex. These problems partly arise because adult education researchers have never had a map of the territory which embraces a broad array of epistemologies or theoretical predilections. This paper is designed to remedy this situation.

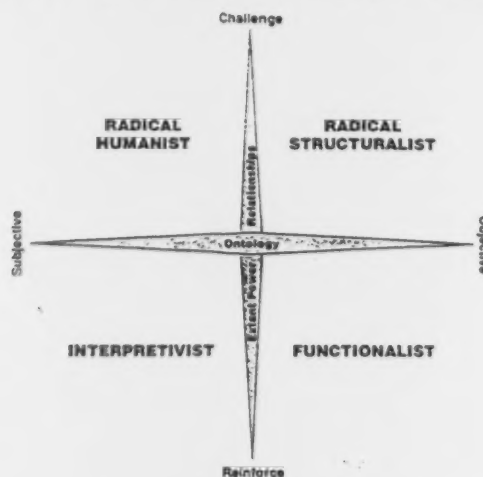


Fig. 1. Map of Adult Education Territory

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to present a conceptual map of social theory and adult education research. Entries on this map are arrayed along two orthogonal axes. The first is concerned with "ontology" (from subjectivist to objectivist) the second with the extent to which the research "reinforces" or "challenges" extant power relationships (the "change" axis). The two axes in Fig. 1 lie in an orthogonal relationship to each other. Treat them like latitude and longitude on a nautical chart. They identify epistemological positions in adult education research. Part of the power in this model resides in the fact it is pluralistic, embraces a broad spectrum of thinking about research and could lead to a lessening of the artillery duels between positivists and post-positivists (see Boshier, 1989). The orthogonal

axes in Fig. 1 embrace four distinct epistemologies (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). With this in mind consider Fig. 1 to be a map of the territory which offers choices for theoretically anchoring research.

### Assumptions

*Ontology:* The first set of assumptions that buttress Fig. 1 concern ontology - the essence of the phenomena. Researchers vary with respect to the extent to which they think there is an objective "reality" - out there - external to the individual. For some there is an objective world inhabited by lawfully interrelated variables. For others, reality is essentially a subjective phenomenon that exists within consciousness. It exists "in the mind". Associated with ontology are other assumptions related to preferences concerning epistemology (anti or post-positivist; positivist), one's beliefs about the nature of human nature (free will; determined) or preferences concerning research methodology (qualitative; quantitative).

*Extant Power Relationships:* Somebody's interests are always being served when educational programs are mounted and research conducted. Sometimes these interests are clouded by rhetoric about the public good. Functionalist-oriented education systems and research are concerned with consolidating the status quo. Research based on conflict theories of the type identified by Paulston (1977) are committed to and seek to explain deep-seated structural change of a type that invariably threaten the interests of certain individuals and groups. Functionalists also seek change but it is ephemeral and superficial compared to that sought by theorists informed by a conflict perspective.

### Four Paradigms

#### Functionalism

*Epistemology:* Functionalism provides an essentially "rational" explanation for social affairs. It is the dominant ideology of our time and characterized by a concern for social order, consensus and social integration. Its epistemology tends to be positivist, determinist, and nomothetic. Functionalists want practical solutions to practical problems and are usually committed to social engineering as a basis for change with an emphasis on gradualism, order, and the maintenance of equilibrium. Functionalists attempt to apply models derived from natural sciences to human behaviour. They assume there is an "objective" world "out there" that consists of observable, lawfully-related empirical entities. Mechanistic and biological analogies appeal to functionalists and, in radical functionalist states - such as Singapore - it is engineers who control adult education and shape research (Boshier, 1993).

*Research:* Functionalism is an epistemology and ideology. Adult education research informed by it includes projects associated with government training, manpower or reskilling programs, so-called upgrading programs, most research on continuing professional education (e.g. Houle, 1980), nearly all research on technical or vocational training and adult basic education run by schools, colleges and other school-like institutions. The 1992 attack on Peters and Jarvis (1991) was largely impelled by a feeling that North American adult education research has been excessively shaped by the functionalist notion that adult education is an "applied" discipline, a corollary of which is that the value of research depends upon its "relevance" to practice and practitioners.

#### Interpretivism

*Epistemology:* Researchers and theorists located within an interpretive paradigm are "subjectivists" in that "reality" is what it is construed to be. Great effort is devoted to

adopting the frame of reference of the participant. Social "reality" is a network of assumptions and "shared meanings". The subjectivist ontological assumptions shared by interpretivists stem from the notion that human affairs are ordered, cohesive and integrated. Interpretivists are more concerned with understanding subjectively construed meanings of the world "as it is" than with any utopian view of how it might be. While they are at the subjectivist end of the ontological dimension, they do not anticipate any threat to extant power relationships.

*Research:* Adult education movements, perspectives and researchers located in this corner include Mezirow and Associates (1990), with their concern for perspective transformation; the Swedish phenomenographers (Marton, 1981; 1986) and their disciples (e.g. Pratt, 1992) and, to a certain extent, the notion of andragogy which has some regard to the way adults construe their experience within an "independent" self concept. Mezirow is interesting because while his work is clearly anchored in interpretivist epistemology he claims that "rational thought" is impeded by socio-linguistic, epistemic and psychic "distortions."

### Radical Humanism

*Epistemology:* The radical humanist paradigm encompasses researchers and theorists who want to upset extant power relationships but are anchored within a subjectivist ontology. Those in this paradigm are usually anti (or "post") positivist, nominalist and voluntarist. But, unlike the interpretivists, the radical humanists want to overthrow or transcend existing social arrangements. Many radical humanists employ concepts developed by the young Marx to describe how people carry ideological superstructures which limit cognition and create a "false consciousness" which inhibits self actualization or fulfillment. Radical humanists want to release people from constraints - which largely reside in their own cognitions. It thus seeks transformation, emancipation, and a critical analysis of modes of domination. It wants people to reconstruct their "view" of "reality" and take appropriate action. Thus praxis becomes reflection (or reconstruing) followed by action.

*Research:* Freire's notion of conscientization and popular education are the clearest exemplars of this paradigm. Participatory research, popularized by the International Council of Adult Education, springs from similar ontological and ideological roots. Giroux's (1983; 1988) analyses of American education and resistance theory are other examples. Most research on movements that employ education for cultural revitalization, whether amongst Maori people in New Zealand, Indians in Latin America or the Lap people in the Nordic countries, are informed by radical humanism. Feminism constitutes a special problem although its most energetic branch resides here. So does most of what goes on in the Frankfurt school and critical theory (Kellner, 1989). Existentialism belongs here as well as anarchist-utopians like Illich (1979), Rahnema (1991) or those in UNESCO preoccupied with human consciousness and the need to deschool society in the name of lifelong education or the learning society.

### Radical Structuralism

*Epistemology:* Radical structuralists share fundamental assumptions that buttress functionalism and are committed to the overthrow of social structures that build "false consciousness". If the radical humanists focus on consciousness and meaning, the radical structuralists focus on structures, modes of domination, deprivation, contradictions within an objective social world. Within this paradigm are those who focus on deep-seated internal contradictions within society while others focus on power relationships. But common to all theories in this paradigm is the notion that



each society is characterized by inherent conflicts and, within these, lie the basis of change. The "later" Marx was the chief architect of this position.

A Marxist approach to adult education would focus on the economic and political context in which it was located. An analysis of the "political economy" of adult education shows how its shape and character is determined by the distribution of political and economic power in society. Not all adult education is determined by economic factors but it is "not an autonomous institution that generates all of its own characteristics" (Youngman, 1986, p. 11). As a cultural and ideological institution (part of the "superstructure") education is always linked to political and economic structures and never neutral. Education is one of the ways the ruling classes perpetuate their own privilege and control. People are socialized to "fit in", accept authority, "buy into" orthodox ways of viewing their "lot" or place in life. Underclasses have been indoctrinated with and largely "bought into" the illusion of healthy competition and the possibility of upward social mobility. Marxists are particularly critical of humanistic (largely North American) adult educators who reinforce the illusion that in a capitalist society individual freedom is possible without a fundamental transformation of the system. Moreover, when "radical" techniques become divorced from revolutionary ends, they become reactionary, such as when Freire's notion of "dialogue" was used to domesticate Third World peasants (Kidd and Kumar, 1981).

*Research:* Examples of research that concerned structural relationships between education and society, with a focus on class and power, include Bowles and Gintis (1976) classic study of the American school system. They proposed a "correspondence" theory wherein it is claimed social relations of education directly parallel those of capitalist production. In similar fashion, Carnoy and Levin (1985) claim schooling is class-structured and contributes to "bourgeois hegemony" by being at the centre of the ideological apparatus of the state. In adult education these ideas inform Apple's assertions about relationships between ideology and curriculum, Giroux's preoccupation with resistance, Lovett's community focus, the work of the Highlander Folk School and Law's series of theoretical analyses at the *Adult Education Research Conference*. Altenbaugh's (1990) analyses of the relationships between three labour colleges and Gramsci's notion of hegemony can also be considered as exemplifying a Radical Structuralist perspective. There are numerous examples of research on counter-hegemonic adult education organized by social movements concerned with peace, ecology, womens rights or liberation. All these challenge the dominant ideology and involve a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Most adult education research informed by Radical Structuralism concerns informal and nonformal settings for education.

### Postmodern Turn

Most adult education researchers appear to share a commitment to the notion that individuals can think critically, behave in a socially responsible fashion and "remake the world in the interest of the Enlightenment dream of reason and freedom" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991, p. 57). For many educators and social theorists of the type located in the four quadrants just described, modernism and progress denotes a commitment to rationality, science, technology and the progressive unfolding of history. In this scheme education legitimates notions of "progress".

Today, there is growing uncertainty about modernist assumptions and methods deployed to explain and interpret human experience. This uncertainty has been

expressed, almost simultaneously, in the rise of feminism and postmodernism. Postmodernist critique radically challenges Western enlightenment ideas concerning the self, science, philosophy and art as ways of establishing truth, justice or beauty. These days the position occupied by the researcher has been problematized and "critique" has become a method of analysis along with the "subject" of the "research." For some postmodern critics, theory is a disciplinary mode of thought by which so-called truth or privileged perspectives are imposed as unproblematized ideology. Where power intersects with theory the effect is to inevitably silence someone (Foucault, 1980), to include some things, exclude others. Theory is disciplinary because it normalizes acceptable and unacceptable ways of thinking. Modernist theory of the type laid out in Fig. 1 is also almost exclusively based on European models of culture and civilization, what postmodernist Lyotard (1984) calls the "great story" of the Enlightenment. It is also largely constructed by elite men who look down on or dismiss the validity and importance of popular culture or everyday experience. They are significantly more comfortable studying electrons than Elvis. Postmodern critique challenges the dominance of western cultural models and focuses attention on electronic mass media, the changing nature of class and social formations in post-industrial societies and the growing tendency to transgress boundaries that formerly separated image and "reality", high and popular culture, life and art (Baudrillard, 1988). Postmodernism raises crucial questions concerning the hegemonic aspects of modernism and, by implication, adult education research. Discourses on postmodernism appear to embrace a plethora of reactionary or progressive possibilities (e.g. creating spaces for "other" voices). It involves more than a simple-minded repudiation of the kind of modernism that produced Dachau, Hiroshima, Chernobyl, Bophal or the Gulf War. It involves a different modulation of the themes and categories of modernism. In a broad sense it refers to an intellectual position and mode of criticism as well as to a set of socio-cultural and economic conditions associated with global capitalism, and the crisis of industrialization. It is both a condition and critique.

*Research:* This postmodern turn has infused new perspectives into adult education research. Biography, autobiography and ethnography all involve exploration of subjective perspectives in local and particularized ways. There are new ways of establishing reliability and validity (Lather, 1986), genealogical records of historical particularities of institutional, domestic and popular or everyday practices are being explored afresh as are relationships between popular culture and schooling (Giroux and Simon, 1993; Pittman, 1990). There are many discourses on postmodernism and great concern about its embrace of radical relativism (Briton and Plumb, 1992a; Collard and Law, 1990). The boundaries between so-called "educational" and other disciplines are disintegrating and, to a certain extent, researchers now seek knowledge about adult education through analysis of popular media (Boshier, 1992a, 1993a; Briton and Plumb, 1992, 1992a) and everyday discourse (Carriere, 1993; 1994). The body has been politicized as a site of surveillance and discipline (Sawicki, 1988) and the libido, previously suppressed by the Cartesian obsession with distinguishing mind from body has become a focus for attention.

### Conclusion

This map enables researchers to locate their own theoretical commitments and preferences within the broader context of social theory and will hopefully lead to a lessening of the often counter-productive artillery duels that go on between so-called "qualitative" and "quantitative" researchers or "critical" and "uncritical" theorists.

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# CONCEPTUALISING LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE: DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR FACILITATION

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## ABSTRACT

The key feature of adult learning is the the experience which learners bring with them. Whatever else they may be, adult educators are essentially workers with the experience of others. This paper describes a model designed to aid thinking about learning from experience and how it can be facilitated.

## HOW LITTLE WE KNOW ABOUT LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Increasingly we are confronted with situations in which adult educators are working with many different learners and attempting to help them learn from their experience. This may be in the context of the recognition of prior learning and returning to study, adult basic education, vocational training and workplace learning or community intervention. What does adult learning theory tell us about how we can operate effectively in such situations? What research is there that can inform the decisions we make on a day-to-basis when we make an educational intervention in the classroom, workplace or the community? There is a lot of research and writing, of course, about teaching in which the teacher is the authority and the learner acquires knowledge from this source, but literature offers relatively little assistance when learners' experience is the central resource for learning.

## WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE OFFER?

While much has been written about the importance of learning from experience, the present literature falls short in providing frameworks that aid the facilitation of such learning. There is also a lack of attention in adult learning literature to the work that has been done, predominantly with adults, in the field of experience-based learning. Schön (1983, 1987) has drawn attention to the place of reflective practice, particularly reflection-in-action in learning in the professions, but his metaphorical modes of description mean that application to practice must necessarily be indirect. Kolb (1984) has produced a useful pragmatic device in his version of the Lewinian experiential learning cycle, but it is insufficiently wide ranging to sustain the weight of situations to which it has been applied. Jarvis (1987) has stressed the importance of the social context of learning from experience and developed a model, but this is complicated and limited by the particular empirical data set he used. Although Heron (1989, 1993) has provided the most sophisticated and theoretically rich accounts of the facilitation of adult learning so far, his models place much more emphasis on the role of the facilitator than on the features and dynamics of experience-based learning. None of these authors have sufficiently addressed the needs of those confronted with the typically context-specific and personally-embedded learning which characterises the tasks which adults face.

## DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL

The paper explores the use of a model of learning from experience to aid learners, and those who assist them, to examine and remind them of their own facilitative practices. Such a model will succeed only if the elements represented are both central to an appreciation of learning from experience and if they are formulated in a way which 'makes sense' and are useable by practitioners. The key elements of such a model are presented in the paper and interrelated in a form designed to guide the design and processing of learning from experience in any setting. The proposed model represents a critical reflective approach which is context conscious.



The model has been developed from the experiences of members of the Australian Consortium on Experiential Education (ACEE), an extended group of researchers and practitioners mostly based in Sydney, Australia who have been concerned with finding ways of conceptualising their own practice as learners and facilitators of learning. It originated in two parts. The first stage of development, which focused on reflection on experience, emerged following consideration of a series of workshops conducted by the ACEE on the facilitation of learning from experience (Boud, Keogh & Walker 1985). The second stage is more recent and, starting from a focus on the role of reflection in learning, considered the interaction of learners with learning activities and explored the role of preparation for experience and reflection in the midst of action (Boud & Walker 1990). The model presented here has been used in a variety of experience-based workshop and field-placement settings, and modified in the light of feedback from those who have used it.

The model is an indicative rather than a normative one, aimed at prompting learners and facilitators to address processes of learning as well as the ostensible content of learning activities. It provides a source of suggestions for how learning *might* be prompted, not a prescription for desired process. It draws from various theories and concepts in education and the social sciences—probably more than the authors are consciously aware—and organises them around the notion of a learning event in which learning from experience is the *raison d'être*.

## ASSUMPTIONS

The basic assumption of the model is that learning is always rooted in prior experience and that any attempt to promote new learning must in some way take account of that experience. All learning builds on existing perceptions and frameworks of understanding and links must be made between what is new and what already exists if learners are to make sense of what is happening to them. Conventional teaching does this to a very limited extent when teachers make what they regard as plausible assumptions about what learners already know and sometimes check this out through questioning and testing students. However, this is an insufficient basis for forms of learning which significantly involve affective and conative as well as cognitive learning.

Learners bring with them to any event their *personal foundation of experience*. This is a way of describing the influence of all their previous experiences on them now. We all bring our embodied life history with us on every occasion and this will profoundly affect our perceptions of what does and does not count as important, it acts to sensitise us to some features of our world and blind us to others and it shapes the *intent* we have which guides our priorities. Normally our personal foundation of experience is not readily accessible to us and can only be inferred with difficulty from our actions and our intent.

The second assumption behind the model is that the process of learning from experience is necessarily an active one which involves learners in engaging with and intervening in the events of which they are part. This engagement and intervention is with what is termed the *learning milieu*—ie. the social, psychological and material environment in which the learner is situated. There is room for vicarious learning in which the learner appears to learn from the experience of others or appears to be passive, but even in these cases there has to be an active engagement of the mind of learners with the experience of others so that the learners might identify with and make the experience of others part of themselves. There is no clear demarcation between vicarious and experiential learning: one merges imperceptibly into the other. Our personal foundation of experience and intent influences predisposes us towards active engagement in any given situation and it may be necessary for teachers and facilitators to provide compelling reasons, particularly to learners encultured into the relatively passive norms of conventional teaching or in social roles in which they are oppressed by others, why they may gain more from an active and participatory stance than an accepting one, if indeed this is the case.

## THE MODEL

While the prime focus of the model is on learning which is planned and organised by learners or others on their behalf, the elements of it can just as well be applied in situations in which learning is not the initial impetus for engaging in a particular event. For example, informal learning in the workplace or community. It is convenient to discuss the model in terms of the three stages of engagement in a learning event: activities and experiences prior to the event, during the event, and those which occur subsequently. See Figure 1. Other models, for example, those of Kolb (1984) and Schön (1983) place prime emphasis on one of these only.

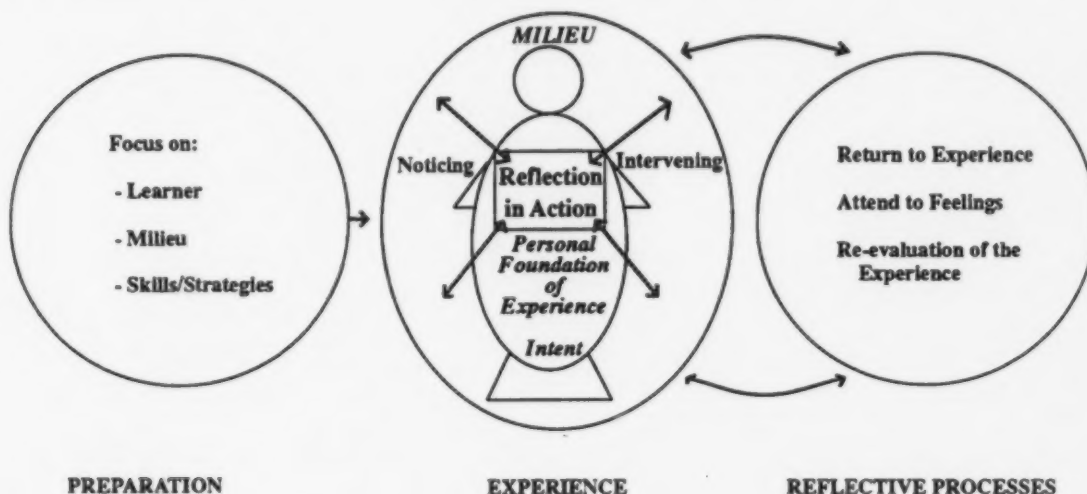


Figure 1. Model for promoting learning from experience

### *Prior to the event*

The emphasis here is on what preparation may be required to enhance the possibility of the event being one from which a given learner can learn fruitfully? The model suggests that there are three main considerations which should be taken into account. Firstly, a focus on the learner. What intent and specific goals does the learner bring to the event? What part of their personal foundation of experience of which they are aware may be engaged or provoked? What are his or her expectations of the event, the outcomes? Secondly, a focus on the milieu. Usually, much of the learning milieu in any event is given and cannot be altered. What is fixed and what can be changed? What does the learner need to know about the rules? What possibilities for interactions with people and materials are there available? Thirdly, a focus on learning skills and strategies. It is not sufficient for there to be a focus on the learner and on the milieu as the learner is often not equipped to make use of the opportunities which exist. What preparation or rehearsal may be needed to maximise and create opportunities for learning? What guides, heuristic devices or learning-to-learn strategies might be usefully learned and deployed?

### *During the event*

It is the learner's engagement with the milieu which constitutes the particular learning experience. Learners create a learning milieu through their presence and interaction with it. Through *noticing*, *intervening* and *reflection-in-action* they steer themselves through the milieu in accordance with their intents and what is available for them to use in this process.

*Noticing* is an act of becoming aware of what is happening in and around oneself. It is directed towards both the interior and exterior worlds and involves attending to thoughts and feelings. Noticing affects the extent to which the learner is involved in the process whether or not the learner might appear 'active' to others.

*Intervening* refers to any action taken by the learner within the learning situation affecting the learning milieu or the learner. Again, intervening may not be overt and noticeable to others, but is an act which brings about some change. The conscious decisions not to speak or to focus ones attention on interior rather than exterior dialogue can be forms of intervention just as much as a provocative question or a physical act.

*Reflection-in-action* describes the process of working with noticing and intervening to interpret events and the effects of ones interventions. For much of the time these factors are invisible and unconscious and, as Schön eloquently points out, they are part of the artistry of effective practice. However, in developing expertise of any kind it can often be helpful to become more deliberate and conscious of the process and be aware of the decisions which are being made by oneself and others. It is through exposing these decisions to scrutiny that the assumptions behind them can be identified and a conscious decision taken to act from a new perspective.

While these factors are obviously applicable to forms of experience-based learning such as gaming and simulation, role-play, practical work and adventure training, the model can be applied to any context which involves meaningful learning.

### *Following the event*

Much important learning can occur following an event as the distractions of the milieu and the lack of opportunity to stand aside from the dynamics of the action limit what it is possible to do at the time. Some aspects inevitably take time and the ability to view particular events in a wider context. Reflection after the event has been discussed over many years, but the formulation of it in the model emphasises that it is not simply a process of thinking, as Dewey has appeared to suggest, but one which essentially involves feelings and emotions. It has three elements: *return to experience, attending to feelings and re-evaluation of experience.*

- *Return to experience*

The base of all learning is the lived experience of the learner and to return to this and recapture it in context in its full impact allows for further reflection. Often too little emphasis is placed on what happened and how it was experienced at the time. Judgements about this are made prematurely and possibilities for further learning can be shut out for ever. Mentally revisiting and vividly portraying the focus experience can be an important first step.

- *Attending to feelings*

As part of returning to the experience, learners focus on the feelings and emotions which were (and are) present. These feelings can inhibit or enhance the possibilities for further reflection and learning. Feelings which are experienced as negative may need to be discharged or sublimated otherwise they may continually colour all other perceptions and block understanding; those experienced as positive can be celebrated as it is these which will enhance motivation and desire to pursue learning further.

- *Re-evaluation of experience*

Re-acquaintance with the event and attending to the thoughts and feelings associated with it, prepares the ground for freer evaluation of their experience. There are four aspects of the process of re-evaluation which may need to be considered by the learner. They are: *association*—relating new information to that which is already known; *integration*—seeking relationships between new and old information; *validation*—determining the authenticity for the learner of the ideas and feelings which have resulted; and *appropriation*—making knowledge one's own, a part of one's normal ways of operating. These aspects should not be thought of as stages through which learners should pass, but parts of a whole.

These reflective processes can be undertaken in isolation from others, but this may often lead to a reinforcement of existing views and perceptions. Working one-to-one or with a group for which learning is the *raison d'être* can begin to transform perspectives and challenge old patterns of learning. It is only through give and take with others that critical reflection can be promoted.

## USING THE MODEL

The description above is a brief outline of the model's main features. It has been formulated to emphasise the culturally-embedded nature of learning, the potential scope of agency on the part of the learner and the internal and external barriers to learning which exist and which may be able to be addressed. It can be used with an emphasis on different features. At one level it draws attention to the need to consider particular issues in designing learning activities, at another it can emphasise critical reflection and the questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions (Walker & Boud 1992).

In use, it is necessary to take the generic features described and translate them into specifics which relate to particular learning goals, groups and contexts. For example, if the learning event is a student work placement, then it would be necessary to establish activities prior to the placement that enabled learners to focus on what they bring to the placement, what the particular environment they will enter has to offer and what strategies they will deploy in the midst of their placement to ensure that they are actively pursuing their learning goals; they can then use the framework of noticing, intervening and reflection-in-action as a tool to keep track of their learning during the placement with whatever checklists, diaries, time out strategies they have organised; and following the placement there will be opportunities for debriefing with colleagues about their shared and unique experiences, what these mean to them and what the implications are for their future learning.

Specific applications to particular contexts examined so far include those to informal workplace learning (Boud & Walker 1991) and to the pastoral placement for students training for the ministry (Walker & Boud, *in press*). Others have used it in the context of nursing practicum and adventure training. The earlier version of the model, focusing on reflection after the event, has been used in many sites in Australia, the UK and New Zealand in nursing, teacher education and management development.

## A PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT

It is with some trepidation that I have presented this framework. Models seem to be out of fashion at present, ditched with the debris of psychological and mechanistic ways of thinking. More than ever in the complex, uncertain post-modern world we operate in, we still need to work with learners, we still need to think systematically about what we are doing and trying to influence and we need some basis for identifying some practices as more appropriate than others in a given context, with particular learners. It is important, of course, that we do not take these artificial constructs too seriously and ask them to carry the full weight of deciding what we should do. We need a focus for debate about what is important which goes beyond fruitless arguments about what counts as or who is 'critical' or just who is oppressing whom. We all use mental models to guide our thinking whether we are conscious of it or not. Let us make these explicit so we can make informed choices about what is worthwhile and what we want to change and so that we can make some of our decision-making processes open to critical scrutiny. Learning from experience is for us, not just something we help others with.



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**TALES FROM THE DARK SIDE:  
A PHENOMENOGRAPHY OF ADULT CRITICAL REFLECTION**

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This paper attempts a phenomenography of critical reflection as it pertains to one group of adults who happen to be adult educators themselves. The adult educators whose voices are heard here were all graduate students at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. They are mostly female, include African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanic-Americans, and work in contexts as varied as the Quaker movement, the U.S. Army, IBM, psychiatric hospitals, community colleges, public schools, and universities. The sample comprises 337 educators, with 223 doctoral students majoring in adult education and 114 graduate students who have written autobiographical analyses of critical reflection episodes in seminars on critical thinking. Their stories of critical reflection are told in four ways: (1) in optional learning journals many have chosen to write during their studies, (2) in personal (office, bar, coffee shop, subway, corridor) conversations, (3) in classroom discussion during troubleshooting time explicitly allocated to making public the internal dimensions of critical reflection as a learning process, and (4) in the structured autobiographical analyses already mentioned. These stories were shared over an 11 year period, 1982-1993 and analysed qualitatively using categories of 'triggers', 'resources', 'rhythms', 'resources' and 'consequences'. As understood here, critical reflection is defined as comprising two interrelated processes: (1) learning to question, and then to replace or reframe, an assumption that is accepted by majority opinion as representing commonsense, and, (2) taking a perspective on social and political structures, or on personal and collective actions, that is strongly alternative to that held by the majority.

Five significant themes emerge from these reports of critical reflection. **Impostorship** (the sense that engaging in critical reflection is not appropriate for 'the likes of me'), **cultural suicide** (the realization that critical reflection invokes the censure of friends, family colleagues and community), **lost innocence** (the pain of acknowledging troubling ambiguities), **roadrunning** (learning critical reflection as a halting, incremental rhythm) and **community** (the importance of peer support groups to critical process). These themes are highlighted for three reasons: (1) they represent the experiential clusters that emerged most frequently across age, class, gender, ethnicity and work setting, (2) they are spoken of with particular passion by

those adults concerned, and (3) the emotional quality of these themes contradicts a great deal of the heady rhetoric surrounding much writing on critical reflection. Although there are stories recounting transformative breakthroughs, emancipation, liberation and empowerment, what figure equally strongly are these tales from the dark side. They represent the hidden underbelly to the inspirational tone imbuing discussion of critical reflection and critical pedagogy.

### **Impostorship**

Impostorship is the sense adult educators possess that at some deep level they possess neither the right nor the talent to become critically reflective. They speak of their engagement in critical process as a form of inauthenticity, as if in taking on the external behaviors associated with critical reflection they are acting in bad faith. They will write papers critical of major theorists and point out shortcomings in academic research without really feeling a sense of inner conviction about these actions. For them, being critical is experienced as a rather unconvincing form of role-taking, even play-acting.

In speaking about impostorship, graduate students viewed it as partly produced by their awareness of the distance they perceived between the idealized images of sophisticated omniscience they attached to reflective practitioners, and their own daily sense of themselves as stumbling and struggling survivors. For many the sense of impostorship was triggered by the news that they had been admitted into a doctoral program that espoused the development of critical reflection as its central aim. This news was frequently met with disbelief. Impostorship was heightened at the opening of the orientation session where each student became privately convinced one of everyone else's infinitely greater talents, confidence and experience. A more complex and embedded manifestation of impostorship was exhibited in the reverence accorded to knowledge enshrined in academic publications. When asked to undertake a critical analysis of ideas on adult learning and education propounded by, for example, Lindeman, Coady, Horton or Freire, graduate students said that to do so smacked of temerity. They complained that their own experience as adult educators was so context-specific and limited that it gave them neither the starting point nor the right to build a critique of major figures in the field, many of whom were regarded as heroic. The same flattening of critical antennae was evident when students were faced with examples of extensively researched and referenced bibliographic scholarship. Additionally, impostorship was increased by what was said to be the remoteness of much writing on critical reflection. The works of Neo-Marxists like Habermas and Gramsci were often spoken of as distancing, difficult, subversive, overly theoretical,

even pretentious. A typical reaction was to conclude that critical reflection was the special province of those students possessing a literary flourish, theoretical sophistication, familiarity with European intellectual traditions, and left-wing political views.

### **Cultural Suicide**

Cultural suicide is the threat learners perceive that if they take the critical questioning of conventional wisdoms and structures too far they will be excluded from the communities that have defined and sustained them up to that point in their lives. Adult educators reported that their taking critical reflection seriously caused those around them to view them with fear and loathing, with a hostility borne of incomprehension. Surfing on a wave of unbridled enthusiasm for the process, and unaware that others might not share this zeal, they report how their wave collapsed in on them as they noticed how their colleagues became angry whenever the importance of critical reflection was mentioned.

Adult education graduate students in critical process who were formerly seen by colleagues as 'one of us' said that now they were now regarded in one of two ways, both of which carried a real sense of threat. On the one hand, these educators were viewed as taking on airs and pretensions, as becoming 'too big for their boots'. Despite their best diplomatic intentions, they came to be seen by their non-graduate student colleagues as people who aspired to the status of intellectuals stalking the lofty groves of academe while looking down on the grubby neanderthals left to wallow in the mire of uncritically reflected daily practice. On the other hand, these adult educators found themselves marginalized as they slipped increasingly into a critical mode in their work. Colleagues came to view them as subversive troublemakers whose professional *raison d'être* seemed to be to make life as difficult as possible for those around them. The educators in this study found that when they returned to the home turf of their employing organizations, their raising of critical questions regarding commonly held assumptions was not met with expressions of unalloyed gratitude by their colleagues. Rather, there was the perception on the part of colleagues that these educators in critical process had somehow betrayed the group culture and become pink tinged revolutionaries. The graduate students complained that being critically reflective had only served to make them disliked by their colleagues, had harmed their careers, had lost them fledgling friends or professionally useful acquaintances, had threatened their livelihoods, and had turned them into institutional pariahs.



## Lost Innocence

Educators in critical process speak of the epistemological as well as cultural risks they run and they see their learning critical reflection as a journey into ambiguity and uncertainty requiring a willingness to let go of eternal verities and the reassuring prospect of eventual truth. In contrast to the relentlessly upbeat rhetoric surrounding much exposition on empowerment, liberation, emancipation and transformation, their descriptions of their journeys as learners are quite often infused with a tone of sadness. In particular, they speak of a loss of innocence - innocence being seen in this case as a belief in the promise that if they study hard and look long enough they will stumble on universal certainty as the reward for all their efforts. People look back to their time as dualistic thinkers, and to their faith that if they just put enough effort into problem solving solutions would always appear, as a golden era of certainty. An intellectual appreciation of the importance of contextuality and ambiguity comes to exist alongside an emotional craving for revealed truth.

## Roadrunning

In speaking of critical reflection as a learning process, these adult educators describe a rhythm of incremental fluctuation; put colloquially, it can be understood as two steps forward, one step back, followed by four steps forward, two steps back, followed by one step forward, three steps back, and so on. It is a rhythms of learning that is distinguished by evidence of an increased ability to take alternative perspectives on familiar situations, a developing readiness to challenge assumptions, and a growing affective tolerance for ambiguity, but it is also one characterised by fluctuating moments of falling back, of apparent regression. When people are in the middle of these temporary regressions they report that they experience them as devastatingly final, rather than inconvenient interludes. They are convinced that they will never 'get' critical reflection, that "it's beyond me", and that they may as well return to tried and trusted ideas and actions on the grounds that even if these didn't account for everything in life at least they were known, comfortable and familiar.

In the roadrunner cartoons we see the same scene repeated endlessly. The roadrunner is hurtling along the highway, his 'beep beep' cry raising the coyote's frustration to ever higher levels. The roadrunner comes to the edge of a canyon and, because he's possessed of supernatural powers, leaves solid ground to go out in mid air. Suspended 2,000 feet above the canyon floor he turns round and makes a face at the coyote, who is himself coming to the edge of the canyon rim. The coyote's adrenaline is already pumping through his veins

with the thrill of the chase (roadrunner might stand as a metaphor for the prospect of eventual certainty described in the comments concerning lost innocence) and he becomes incensed even further by the roadrunner's evident temerity. The coyote's speed picks up and he hurtles off the edge of the canyon into thin air in pursuit of the roadrunner. After about 3 seconds, however, the coyote realizes he's in mid air. He freezes, looks down at the canyon floor 2,000 feet below, looks back at the camera with a quizzical, deflated, goofy expression, and then plunges to the earth, the screen a mess of limbs and bloodless body parts. In the next frame, of course, we see that the coyote has been magically reassembled off camera and that the chase begins anew.

The moment when coyote realizes that he's in mid air - the moment of existential crisis when perception and physics cohere and the law of gravity comes into effect - has the same quality as a particular moment in the incremental rhythm of learning critical reflection. This is the moment when educators in critical process realise they are in a state of limbo. Entranced by the prospect of transformation - of shaking off the shackles of previously distorting, uncritically assimilated assumptions about themselves and their place in the world - they embrace the process of critical reflection with an enthusiasm and optimism borne of the prospect of imminent change for the better. As they struggle to discard or reformulate assumptions that now seem not to explain the world adequately, there is a sense of forward movement, of progress toward true clarity of perception. The critical struggle, with its attendant aspects of impostorship, cultural suicide and lost innocence, is seen as worthwhile because of the transformative fruits it will bear. There comes a terrifying moment, however, when these educators feel they have left behind many of the assumptions, meaning schemes and perspectives which used to explain their world, and that no other coherent ones have moved into the vacuum. At this moment there is a feeling of being in limbo, of being suspended above the earth with the solid ground of familiar assumptions left behind and nothing new that has congealed in their place. This is the time when educators crash to the floors of their emotional canyons, when they face the crises of confidence that cause them to abandon their quest for critical insight and to claw their way back to the security of the known. As happens with the coyote, however, whatever tantalising impulse borne of trauma or discrepancy first spurred them on their search for more authentic assumptions, invariably comes back into play. Sooner or later the journey towards critical clarity begins again, but this time there is a greater preparedness for the moment of suspension, and an ability to stay dangling above the canyon floor for a few seconds longer than was formerly the case.

## Community

The adult education graduate students survived their feelings of impostorship, cultural suicide, lost innocence and limbo through their membership of an emotionally sustaining, peer learning community. This community comprised a small number of colleagues who were also experiencing dissonance, reinterpreting their practice, challenging old assumptions and falling foul of conservative forces. In these supportive reflection groups students made public their discomforts, tested out their new frames and assumptions, and saw their experiences replayed through the eyes of others. The members of these groups were spoken of as critical friends, second families and reflective mirrors. They provided a safe haven in which educators in critical process could confirm that they were not alone, and through which they could make sense of the changes they were experiencing.

## Conclusion

Since learning critical reflection entails so many tales from the dark side it is important that adult educators have the chance to gain accurate insight into the emotional and cognitive ebbs and flows of this process so that periods of confusion and apparent regression can be tolerated more easily. Through reflective learning communities educators can be encouraged to share their private feelings of impostorship at daring to challenge espoused theory in an attempt to help them realize that their private misgivings can coalesce into publicly recognized truth. Knowing that one is not alone in thinking or feeling something that seems divergent is an important step in coming to take one's own experience seriously, especially when that experience is of a critical nature and therefore likely to be devalued by mainstream theory and practice. Taking a critical perspective on practice can easily turn into a council of despair as educators realize the power of the forces and the longevity of the structures ranged against them. However, by using learning communities as the forum in which they can compare their own journeys as critically reflective learners, adult educators realize that what they thought were idiosyncratic incremental fluctuations in energy and commitment, private morale sapping defeats suffered in isolation, and context-specific barriers preventing change, are often features that are paralleled in the lives of colleagues. This knowledge, even if it fails to grant any insights into how these feelings or barriers can be ameliorated, can be the difference between resolving to work for purposeful change whenever the opportunity arises, and falling prey to a mixture of stoicism and cynicism in which staying within comfortably defined boundaries of thought and action becomes the overwhelming concern.

## **The Effects of Continuing Professional Education on the Upward Career Mobility of Health Services Administrators**

Richard Brown (Florida A&M University) and Peter Easton (Florida State University)

*Abstract: This study brings quantitative and qualitative data to bear on investigation of the relationship between the participation of health care administrators in formal and informal types of continuing professional education and their upward career mobility.*

Though continuing professional education (CPE) is a rapidly growing phenomenon in this country, and in the health services field in particular, there have been few studies of the actual impact of participation in CPE on the upward career mobility of those involved. This paper presents the results of a study designed to probe the relationship between different varieties of CPE and the career advancement of health care professionals working in a hospital setting.

### **The Increasing Importance of Continuing Professional Education**

The path that aspiring health services administrators take to achieve the status of chief executive officer (CEO) in the U.S. health care delivery system has changed appreciably in the course of this century. Prior to the development of a master's program for hospital administrators in 1934, candidates usually worked themselves up through the ranks of the hospital hierarchical structure. Called "superintendents" until 1945, aspiring administrators began as accountants, business office managers, nurses or physicians and eventually assumed the chief executive officer position. Some superintendents came to their positions simply by chance rather than by career planning (Neuhauser 1983). By the 1980s, however, this was scarcely an option.

The increase in the number of master's programs, and the emergence of alternative health care delivery models in more recent history have made it possible to graduate and work as an assistant administrator for three to five years, participate in continuing education courses, and then become an administrator. In the early days of hospital administration, continuing professional education (CPE) was obtained almost exclusively by attending a once- or twice-yearly meeting offered by the American Hospital Association (AHA). Today, in addition to sources such as this, continuing education organizations and program offerings have proliferated rapidly; yet little research has been conducted on the effect this activity has had on the upward career mobility of health services administrators.

The CPE needs of health services administrators have at the same time become increasingly diverse, and they continue to change with industry forces. Heightened competition among the increasingly differentiated types of health delivery facilities is one major factor at play. Industry adjustment to recent federal regulations regarding reimbursement of health care expenses -- like the "diagnostic related groups" legislation of 1982 -- and to the over-supply of health services administrators on the labor market has caused the demand for CPE by health services administrators to change as well.



Administrators are struggling to keep both their organizations and their careers viable through participation in relevant continuing education and to differentiate themselves from their competition.

In recent years there has been an unending flow of brochures from many sources describing available training programs for health services administrators and urging them to seek continuing education opportunities in order to maintain their competence. In addition, health services administrators increasingly engage in informal continuing professional education activities on their own, like reading, personal research and reviewing professionally related video and audio tapes. However, there is no clear understanding of the association between participation in continuing education, improved competence, and upward career mobility among health services administrators. Cervero (1990) affirms that the purpose of CPE is to help professionals provide high quality service to clients by improving their knowledge, competence, or performance. Buress (1983) maintains that CPE improves the manager's effectiveness for advancement. No one seems, however, to have explored exactly how CPE improves performance and career advancement for health services administrators.

### **Theoretical framework**

How can the potential contribution of CPE to the upward career mobility of health services administrators best be understood and explained? It is essential as a first step to make a distinction between the related notions of productivity and professional competence, on the one hand, and upward career mobility on the other. The former may or may not be linked to the latter; and CPE may nor may not contribute to either or both. But in this study we have chosen to focus on the career advancement issue in particular.

This research is situated squarely within existing literature on the nature and effects of continuing professional education and is designed to fill in a largely missing dimension of that body of work. The theoretical framework adopted for the investigation is a hybrid of several competing interpretations of training impacts.

The first of these is the instrumental or developmental interpretation, an application of human capital theory and functionalist sociology, which attributes the benefits of CPE to the increased competency it confers on participants (e.g., Mincer, 1974). (It is interesting to note that Gary Becker's initial formulation of the human capital theory was based on the example of on-the-job training.) From this perspective, CPE provides technical skills which increase the productivity of participants, and this productivity is then accurately valued in hiring and promotion decisions.

The second potential framework might be called a "political" interpretation, and can be derived from conflict sociology and critical theory (e.g. Edwards, 1979). Proponent of this view would see the benefits of CPE lying primarily in the opportunities it offers to make important contacts and assimilate culturally into circles of power (e.g., Edwards 1977). Whether or not continuing professional education actually makes its beneficiaries more productive, from this perspective it does provide them with entry into the language and world

of decision-makers and therefore improve their chances for knowing and frequenting the right people.

The third potential framework is a Weberian institutionalist approach, which suggests that CPE will be effective insofar as it confers the symbolic trappings that institutions ritually require of their leadership (e.g., Meyer and Scott, 1985). From this viewpoint, participation in CPE would be valued because institutional leaders are supposed to subscribe publicly to the importance of maintaining professional competence, and therefore this evidence of their fidelity to ritual is a requirement for advancement.

The final potential perspective comes from institutional economics and suggests that training participation provides information that employers need in making advancement decisions whether or not it actually confers any competence on its participants (e.g., Thurow, 1975). Proponents of this viewpoint would maintain that employers value productivity but have few means of actually measuring it. They therefore fall back on "proxy" indicators. Education is among these, and since participation in CPE is typically nearer in time to the hiring or promotion decision than initial academic preparation, it may serve as a criterion for such career decisions.

### Methods and Data

The research design for this study involved a multi-method approach, triangulating on the underlying questions from analysis of four kinds of data: (1) correlation of the amount and kind of CPE participation of health care executive respondents ( $n=152$ ) with their actual degree of career advancement over the last 10 years; (2) opinions of these same respondents concerning the impact of CPE participation on their upward career mobility relative to other important factors; (3) intensive interviews with a small subsample of health care professionals ( $n = 5$ ); and (4) opinions of a sample ( $n = 35$ ) of Hospital Board Chairpersons who are responsible for the hiring and promotion of executives concerning the weight that they typically accord to evidence of CPE participation in these personnel decisions.

The independent variable of the study, degree of participation in continuing professional education, was defined to include *both* formal and informal types of CPE and was measured via a questionnaire designed to determine approximately how many hours per week, month or year (as appropriate) respondents had devoted on the average to different specific forms of CPE over the past several years. The dependent variable of the study was degree of upward career mobility on these individuals' part. Five levels of health care administrator status were distinguished: middle management, assistant administrator, associate administrator, chief operating officer, and chief executive officer (CEO). Because of the difficulty of assigning interval scale properties to the rungs in this hierarchy, it was decided to seek a first approximation of the degree of association between CPE and UCM by "dichotomizing" the dependent variable into two categories: those who had made it to CEO status in a hospital setting and those who had not. In addition, however, a second and more equal dichotomization according to the net change in status level on the five-rung scale was attempted to cross-check results. Given, moreover, the possibilities of triangulation with the opinions expressed by HCAs and board members concerning the impact of CPE on upward

career mobility, we felt that our overall design enabled us to compensate for these necessary weaknesses in the dependent measure. In addition, information was gathered on a certain number of potential intervening variables to cross-tabulate with the CPE-UCM association and support causal inferences.

A nationwide sample of health care professionals participated in the research and was drawn from members of the American College of Health Executives who work in relatively homogeneous hospital settings. It comprised 195 individuals chosen and stratified in such a way as to eliminate some of the rival explanations of findings. Respondents all began work in the health care administration field in 1982 at the middle management or assistant administrator level, upon completion of a Masters degree in a related field. Their CPE participation and upward career mobility were (retrospectively) tracked over the same 10 year period, 1982-1992. By this means, it was possible to control for the influences of history, previous education and time-in-field on the results. 152 valid responses were received and analyzed.

### Results

The data concerning CPE and upward career mobility are presented in Tables 1 and 2 hereafter. The respondent group was predominantly (77%) male and nearly entirely (97%) white. The large majority (90%) were between 30 and 49 years of age. Educational attainments and time in service were almost identical, for the reasons already explained.

The first thing to be noted from the tabulated data is that though respondents reported participating in an average of approximately 85 hours of formal CPE per year (of which 40% was experienced through professional meetings), participation in informal CPE was reported to be *almost twenty times as great* (mean of 1645 hours per year). Even when the category "personal discussions" is taken out of this count (and it was the largest), the total is still just under 700 hours per year, or more than eight times as much time as was reported spent in formal training.

Table 1. Relationship between attainment of CEO status and participation in continuing professional education (n=152)

| Category of respondent | Number of respondents | Average hours of Formal CPE | Average hours of Informal CPE |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (a) CEOs               | 26                    | 101.4                       | 2116.8                        |
| (b) Non-CEOs           | 126                   | 78.6                        | 1585.7                        |
| Total Sample           | 152                   | 85.3                        | 1645.2                        |
| Difference (a-b)       | --                    | 22.8                        | 531.1                         |
| p                      | --                    | .062                        | .013                          |

When group means are compared between respondents who had risen to CEO status and those who had not, CEOs reported higher average totals in both formal and informal categories; but the difference is greater and attains statistical significance at the 0.05 level only in regard to informal CPE. This is partly due, however, to the relatively small size of the CEO group. When the same comparison of group means is made with the more equitably dichotomized variable, "number of status levels changed", the group characterized by greater upward career mobility (net change of 2 to 4 levels) reports significantly more formal as well as informal CPE than the group characterized by lesser upward career mobility (negative change to 1 level upward).

Table 2. Relationship between amount of upward career mobility and participation in continuing professional education (n=152)

| Category of respondent | Number of respondents | Average hours of Formal CPE | Average hours of Informal CPE |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (a) Greater UCM        | 69                    | 91.9                        | 1810.9                        |
| (b) Lesser UCM         | 75                    | 68.5                        | 1554.5                        |
| Overall Sample         | 144 <sup>1</sup>      | 76.8                        | 1669.2                        |
| Difference (a-b)       | --                    | 23.4                        | 256.4                         |
| p                      | --                    | .05                         | .03                           |

Cross-tabulation of these mean differences with selected categorical or dichotomized control variables (gender, type of initial organizational setting, professional association membership, number of positions occupied) did little to affect the relationships just described, with two notable exceptions: First, the number of positions occupied during the ten year period was strongly associated with both formal and informal CPE: that is, those who had moved more from position to position tended to report significantly higher levels of CPE. Second, "fellows" of the dominant professional association (ACHE) reported significantly greater CPE participation than those who had not achieved this status.

**Opinions of HCAs and Hospital Board Members.** Both HCAs and the Board Members surveyed ranked increasing knowledge and effectiveness and professional networking as the top benefits of CPE, but relegated upward career mobility to near bottom ranking. In a list, moreover, of factors accounting for UCM, administrators ranked CPE 17th out of 25, and Board Members ranked it 21st. As one administrator put it,

The bottom line is who you know, not what you know. Nonetheless, professional education has increased my confidence, my ability, plus my ability to attract consulting clients.

<sup>1</sup> Missing cases account for the difference with the total sample count of 152.



Another added, "Many times networking occurs at these sessions which may lead to other opportunities." A Board Member commented, "Participation in continuing education will serve to enhance these factors [track record, problem-solving ability, etc.] -- not [to] displace them."

### Interpretation and Conclusions

Respondents report substantial participation in continuing professional education activities, particularly the informal variety. A synthesis of the empirical and opinion data suggests that CPE is strongly believed to increase competence, but has only a weak relationship with actual upward career mobility, and one probably explained in greater part by its "networking" aspects than by its certification and competence-generating ones. These results are thus most consistent with the "political" interpretive framework suggested above: CPE is a way to "showcase" other characteristics that one already has and to establish networks and contacts that can be instrumental in career advancement.

Interestingly, however, respondents report greatest participation in *informal* CPE (and it is the variety that best discriminates between the upwardly mobile and those who are less so) -- whereas it is arguably the less visible variety and the one that affords less opportunity for networking. That observation suggests in turn that CPE is prized for its impact on continuing effectiveness in the profession independently of its impact on career advancement.

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## **Radical worker education for academics?**

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*Abstract: In this paper the authors explore the possibilities of interpreting and analyzing academic work within a radical worker education framework.*

### **Introduction**

A primary goal of radical worker education is to help workers become more aware of the oppressive conditions of their work in order to improve these conditions. This is a noble goal, but it contains interesting questions and assumptions: For instance, who counts as a worker? What is work? Where does the intellectual work of academics and educators fit in? What would radical worker education look like in an academic setting?

This paper emerged out of our academic work as ethnographic researchers in blue-collar, social-movement, and para-professional work settings. As researchers exploring the conditions of other people's work we encountered uncertainty and ambivalence--in our own thinking as well as in the thinking of those in our field sites--about the legitimacy of research as "work" and about the meaning of work in general. We came to think that radical worker education would be a valuable framework not only for exploring underlying themes in our common experience but also for exploring the conditions of academic work more broadly. We also thought it would help us better appreciate what the processes of radical worker education expect of people who are engaged in it.

In the paper we first make the point that university work counts as work, and then outline key features of our approach to worker education--a radical approach. Taking the first step of radical worker education, we then critically reflect on circumstances of our work and work settings. Finally, we reflect more broadly on the question of radical worker education for academics.

### **Work and Radical Worker Education**

Any discussion of worker education must begin with giving some thought to what we mean when we talk about work and workers. In this paper, we argue for a broad conceptualization of both terms, to recognize as work areas of endeavour that are often unpaid and invisible, and to get beyond divisions between paid workers by the colour of their collar (white, pink, blue). Our point is not to discount or minimize these divisions but to see the commonalities that underlie them, and to recognize that in the current economic climate all workers face common threats to livelihood and wellbeing. Radical worker education, we believe, is relevant not just to the blue collar and union workers with whom it is originally identified, but to all workers--educators and academics not least among them.

The approach to radical worker education we adopt in this paper includes

several features.<sup>1</sup> First, it recognizes the possibility of fundamental conflicting interests amongst the main actors--employers, employees, and educators. It also acknowledges that workers are first humans whose roles as parent, worker, citizen, friend flow organically together and cannot be artificially separated according to time of day or location.

From this perspective, the process of worker education starts with the articulation by workers of the problems they experience in their everyday working life. Central to this process is collective analysis of worklife problems and the larger economic and political forces which influence working conditions. As a result, assumptions and interests embedded in people's work and workplace are unveiled and demystified, and new knowledge is created. The aim of radical worker education from this view is action toward an expanded, inclusive conception of work and the creation of a more just and democratic workplace.

### **The Everyday World of Work: Fieldwork as Problematic**

University work includes research, writing and publishing, teaching and learning, and other activities such as committee work and administration. Although all of these aspects of work are important to consider, for the sake of brevity, in this paper we focus specifically on research. In the following discussion, we locate ourselves in the sites where we worked as ethnographic researchers: Jane at a residential construction site, Andrea with feminist groups concerned with the economy, and Shauna at a child care centre. The focus of attention in each case is on how our assumptions about our work were challenged by how others saw us as workers. Our observations reflect what could be considered the first step in the process of worker education--the articulation of problems experienced in everyday working life.

**Jane: At the Jobsite:** How would I locate myself as a worker? I am a third year doctoral student and consider my studies a full time job. But I am aware of how friends and acquaintances from outside the university sometimes regard academic activities to be less than real work: "*When are you going to get a real job?*" people sometimes ask, along with the usual jokes about university life as a way of avoiding work as long as possible.

The topic of my dissertation research is concerned with how workers give meaning and value to their work--especially as shaped by views and experiences of education. The occupational context of my research is the residential construction industry. I did a one-year ethnographic study of a crew of carpenters building an architect-designed family home. The experience of doing this fieldwork gave me many occasions to observe how in some ways the spheres of "education" and "work" entail distinct and separate cultures, but how in other ways the distinctions between them are blurred and entangled.

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<sup>1</sup>See Adamson (1978), Fryer (1990), GATT-Fly (1983), Hellyer and Schulman (1989), Martin (1989).

When I reflect on what it was like to be an academic worker studying workers in the skilled trades, I recall a sense of self-consciousness about how unskilled--at least in the obvious, demonstrable ways--my own work seemed to be. Although sometimes I helped with tasks such as cleaning up, running errands or passing tools, my main role at the site was "observer" rather than "participant". This was necessary to accomplish what I wanted. But I was aware of how unbusy my own work seemed, in relation to the busy, complex work scene I was observing. Work at the site often involved physical effort, the results of which--in everything from coping a mitre joint to digging a hole--were evident for all to see. My own activities at the site (watching, talking, taking notes) didn't *look* like work in any real sense, by comparison. The product of these activities (my dissertation) had no recognizable use, and was not to be achieved until some time too far in the future to be meaningful.

As Andrea observes below about her own fieldwork, my experience of doing fieldwork in a work setting very different from my own stimulated me to think about the relationship of my work to other kinds of work in the world. It was ironic that as a university-based worker, I was accorded a social status that the carpenters at the site didn't necessarily aspire to, but held in some esteem. However, the kind of work that got the most respect, the kind of work that constituted *work* in that setting, was the most physical--the kind of work that, in terms of the status hierarchy in society at large, gets low recognition and low pay. My work was visible in terms of status but invisible in terms of what it entailed; their work was visible in terms of what it entailed but invisible in terms of social status. This has led me to the view that *all* work ought to be explored more closely in terms of what it involves, what it signifies, and what ultimately can be done to bring us closer together as workers, recognizing and appreciating the work of others.

**Andrea: Social Movement Groups:** In the early stages of data gathering in my doctoral research I met situations that offered me the opportunity to think about my work as an academic. Hoping to study certain aspects of economics education provided by feminist groups, I encountered resistance by some activists to the prospect of my doing research in their group. They questioned the value and motives of this academic work on several grounds. First, they had first-hand experience of the social and economic conditions and needs of workers, and expected my academic work would likely be out of touch, irrelevant, and politically blind to these realities. Second, holding a strong view of both the enormity of their task and the urgency of their work, they conveyed to me their clear belief that in comparison, academic work was not valuable enough to justify accommodating me by reallocating their scarce resources of time and attention. One potential participant, in fact was actively anti-(formal) education in her views. Last, one activist articulated what others may have felt privately: university-based work already has a privileged position in the social status and power hierarchy - a position which has been built partially upon the backs of lower status workers by making them objects of study. She wondered why she should participate in perpetuating this arrangement by agreeing to give me access to her work and



workplace.

It was my encounter with these challenges that stimulated me to reflect on my own values and assumptions about the work I do. I did not question fundamentally the worth of my work or of intellectual work in general; however, the experience did give me the opportunity to reflect on the *relationship* of my intellectual work to other kinds of work and with other workers. In this challenge I explored the differences and the similarities of our work. The extent of my relative privilege emerged; for example, I had to confront the difference in social status and living standards the anticipated pay for my work will afford in comparison to the activists'. On the other hand, I began to see how the conditions of my work at my university were influenced by some of the same forces affecting both the non-governmental organizations to which I eventually gained access, and the fish-plant workers, data processors, and women on welfare with whom they worked. This was quite startling. Focussing on my institution itself, I began thinking of it in more structural terms and of how those structures affect my daily experience of doing my work of research, designing curriculum, teaching, and co-operating with colleagues. Shauna addresses some of these issues in more detail below. As I began to develop a new understanding of just what the problems were about, I also saw the possibility of new alliances and strategies for making some changes.

Thinking about my work had an emotional dimension as well as an intellectual one. It was impossible at times to ignore the overwhelming sense of powerlessness and discouragement that arose from an analysis of the complex global forces penetrating all the way down through social and institutional structures to affect my own work setting. In other moments I felt a surge of energy, excitement, and satisfaction sharing struggles and visions in unplanned informal discussions with other academics.

**Shauna: Child Care:** I've been thinking about work--a lot--the restructuring of work, the work of other women affected by the new economic reality, the work of day care workers, and how caring for others counts as work. Since completing my doctorate last year, I face the economic reality of budget cuts in post secondary education. As a result, I have been working in the "soft" arena of research grants and sessional teaching - a world of work characterized by low pay, low status and no benefits. Another arena I work in is in the community, being an active participant in several advocacy groups whose focus is on women's access to quality training and to jobs that pay a living wage. Thus, the boundary between my paid and unpaid work is often blurred.

Let me focus a bit more on the research work I am currently doing. Like Andrea and Jane, I have been immersed in fieldwork for the last two years. The focus of my research has been a three year study which is exploring what it is that child care workers do and what is the meaning and value given to their work. We have begun this research by acknowledging that caring for children has been located, for the most part, in the private world of the home, that it is work done mostly by women, and that it is neither highly valued, visible, nor understood. Given that early childhood education is now part of the public arena of paid

workers, has this shift from private to public made any difference to the values and meanings of this kind of work? Last year, I completed the data collection for an ethnographic study of a child care centre and currently, I am doing fieldwork at an early childhood education training program. The child care workers contacted for the study have been supportive and curious and have made me feel welcome at their work sites. Their main concerns have been about being observed and potentially evaluated or judged, and about how the information and analysis will be ultimately used. Although I felt welcomed, as I compared my role as a fieldworker with that of child care workers, I found myself at times uncomfortable and questioning what kind of work was valuable. It was difficult to justify my sitting and observing (doing "non-work"?) when the staff were dealing with twenty five children aged three to five who needed everything they had to give.

By juxtaposing my academic work with the work of early childhood educators or child care workers, I think differently about both the research I am engaged in and the conditions of my work. Much like the child care workers I have come to know, my work--in the soft arena of sessionals and research grants--is neither highly valued, understood nor visible. Like child care work, it is work dominated by women. Much like the child care workers, I experience isolation from other workers in other similar settings. It is difficult for sessional academic workers, like child care workers, to work collectively given that there is little contact between workers at different centres/departments/faculties. Much like child care work, sessional work remains, for the most part, unorganized. In a similar vein, both child care work and sessional work, if unorganized, have limited opportunities for advancement. And like child care workers, sessional work, at least in my experience, is about caring, caring for students and colleagues--work that is not highly valued nor rewarded. It seems that there is much rhetoric given to the importance of caring for children and to teaching in the university setting. But in both contexts it appears that the rhetoric is not matched by reality.

### Summary

Our private--and isolated--critical reflections emerged out of our everyday life as fieldworkers, rather than abstract theorizing. It was in talking with each other about our concerns, in the form of what is often denigrated as gossip or complaining, that we were able to think about our own work differently: First, we were able to deepen our understanding of the forces and structures that contributed to the difficulties in our work. Second, this more collective process stimulated further investigation, contributed to an acknowledgement of the feelings or emotional responses we have to our work, and increased our sense of energy and courage. Finally, it has suggested action to improve working conditions--like the possibility of alliances instead of conflict between students and faculty, and coalitions with workers doing similar work outside academia. These processes and possibilities are precisely what radical worker education entails.

Radical worker education urges educators to move beyond a singular focus on up-grading of skills in the new technologies and collective bargaining strategies. Similarly, the informal early steps in worker education discussed here

suggest that academics should embrace a form and philosophy of worker education that goes beyond professional development seminars and retreats and takes a more analytical, critical look at the assumptions and conditions of the work we do.

### Final Comments

These are times of change and restructuring in the economy. Universities, colleges, faculties of education and adult education programs are feeling the affect of economic restraint. Budget cuts and increasing pressures on educational institutions to solve a variety of economic crises have altered the terrain in which we work. The work load and demands of academic life appear to be increasing, which has implications for our roles not just as workers but as parents, citizens, friends. These crisis conditions, we argue, offer unique opportunities to critically reflect on our work as academics.

In this paper we have only touched on the beginning stages of a process that we have identified as worker education for academics. Having done so we agree that it is worth pursuing the idea of worker education for ourselves and our colleagues further. Our experiences and discussions have highlighted for us how little this kind of critical reflection takes place in academia and have also shown us that this kind of work is a form of resistance. We need to move this kind of discussion into the public arena and give it some structure, borrowed from radical worker education.

This paper has argued that worker education has been mapped too narrowly. By mapping it more broadly, perhaps we as adult educators and academics could expand our understanding of our own practice to include an examination of the ambiguous nature and conditions of our own work--the kind of thing that, within radical worker education, we encourage others to do. Engaging in this kind of process will not only help us in our own work, but will also help us appreciate what we're asking of people when we ask them to examine the conditions of *their* work.

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## An Ethic of Care in the Legal Profession: Not For Women Only

Camille A. Carr

**Abstract:** This study examines how lawyers with an ethic of care handle conflicts between their personal values and professional ethics. Lawyers maximize their ethic of care by being selective in their practice, extending responsibility, and by being person centered. Conclusions and implications for continuing and legal education are drawn.

### Introduction

The traditional conception of the lawyer's role is undergirded by two ideals, partisanship and neutrality, which determine the conduct of the lawyer (Jack & Jack, 1989; Postema, 1986). In partisanship, the lawyer's only allegiance is to the client. In other words, the lawyer is a partisan of the client. The lawyer is committed to pursue the client's objectives with zeal within and up to the limits of the law. Neutrality means that the lawyer must represent the client and his or her objectives without judging the client's character or the morality of the objectives. The lawyer does not need to consider, nor be held responsible for, the consequences of his or her decisions and actions so long as the lawyer acts within the limits of the law. Consequently, partisanship and neutrality yield an impersonal relationship between lawyer and client (Jack & Jack, 1989).

The legal system in the United States utilizes the competitive, adversarial model, which is based on rights, equality, rules and principles, justice, fairness, and reciprocity (Jack & Jack, 1989). The adversary system consists of lawyers who remain detached from their personal morals, maintain neutrality, and act as partisans. The adversary system of the law works when lawyers fulfill their prescribed professional role and do not substitute this role with their personal values of right and wrong. The moral perspective based on the characteristics of the adversarial legal system is the ethic of justice. According to the professional ethics of the law, then, a lawyer must practice from the moral perspective of the ethic of justice.

An alternative to this perspective is the ethic of care, which focuses on maintaining relationships and connections with others. This personal morality presents a concern for the lawyer to reconcile with his/her professional ethics. Lawyers with an ethic of care may often feel tension as their personal value systems conflict with their professional ethics. The purpose of this study was to explore the ways that lawyers with an ethic of care handle the inherent tension between their personal morality and the ethic of justice that underlies their professional ethics.

### Review of the Literature

Lawrence Kohlberg (1963), a cognitive-development psychologist, formulated a theory of moral development that currently prevails. From his research on all-male samples, Kohlberg asserts that individuals develop morally through a stepwise, invariant, and hierarchical sequence of stages toward the universal principle of justice. The individual develops from a



focus on self, to a focus on others, toward an increasing separation from others. This pattern of development is termed an ethic of justice.

Noting the absence of women in Kohlberg's research on moral development, Carol Gilligan (1977, 1982), a former student of Lawrence Kohlberg, conducted studies to identify the distinctive perspective associated with women in the construction and resolution of moral dilemmas. "It was an effort to ask a different question, seeking to discover whether something had been missed by the practice of leaving out girls and women at the theory-building stage of research in developmental psychology" (Gilligan, 1986, p. 325).

Gilligan (1977, 1982) found that moral development occurs through three perspectives, from a focus on self, to a focus on other, and then toward increasing interdependence as the individual resolves the tension between care and responsibility of self with care and responsibility of others. Extending care, then, becomes the universal obligation. Although her research samples include both men and women, Gilligan associates the ethic of care with women because her studies have demonstrated that this moral orientation is more prevalent in women.

Gilligan's (1977, 1982) work as well as research conducted by others (Friedman, Robinson, & Friedman, 1987; Jack & Jack, 1989; Lyons, 1983, 1987; Yacker & Weinberg, 1990) have demonstrated the existence and significance of this moral orientation of care. This understanding is of particular importance in the law. The literature has shown that both care and justice moral orientations exist in this profession (Jack & Jack, 1989; Yacker & Weinberg, 1990), yet there has been very little research on this growing concern.

#### Methodology

Since this study was interested in discovering and understanding strategies that lawyers with an ethic of care use in handling conflicts between their personal values and professional ethics, a descriptive, qualitative design was deemed the most appropriate methodology to use. A purposive sample of lawyers was used in this study. Thirteen lawyers, both men and women, were interviewed for the study. Of these, 10 lawyers, seven women and three men, were determined to have an ethic of care and their interviews were used in the data analysis. These lawyers represent a variety of practice contexts, such as domestic relations, disability law, general practice, real estate, mediation, prisoner counseling, public law, and transactional law. These are experienced lawyers; the number of years they have engaged in legal practice ranges from 5 to 17 years.

A semi-structured interview approach was used; certain questions were asked of all participants but flexibility was needed to be responsive to each individual and his or her situation. Questions were centered around the following broad areas: how the lawyer understands and defines his or her role, the interaction with clients, and how the lawyer resolves conflicts between his or her personal morality and professional ethics. The constant comparative method of data analysis yielded three findings.

## Findings

Three major patterns emerged from the interview data and revealed strategies that lawyers with an ethic of care use to handle the tension between their personal values and the ethic of justice underlying their professional ethics. First, these lawyers were selective in their practice. Lawyers with an ethic of care extend their sense of responsibility beyond their clients to family members, to the opposing party, and to society. Finally, they are person centered rather than problem centered in their relationships with clients.

The first strategy that lawyers with an ethic of care use is being selective in their practice in terms of arenas of practice and type of clientele. In this study, the lawyers that were selective in the arenas of practice chose, or switched to, fields of law that were harmonious with their own values. Several lawyers chose domestic relations as a type of practice in which their ethic of care could be expressed. These lawyers view the divorce process as a traumatic experience but one in which they can be of great assistance. Most of the lawyers interviewed chose private practice in order to have the freedom to express their ethic of care by being selective in the cases they will take and the clients they will represent. Private practice also allowed them to balance their own needs with those of others. Some of the lawyers in domestic relations were selective in child custody cases by only representing the client if he or she was determined to be the best parent. Several of the lawyers were selective regarding the clientele they represented. They specifically targeted the lower socioeconomic class to represent because of this class's disenfranchised position in society.

The second strategy that lawyers with an ethic of care employ for dealing with an ethic of justice system is to consciously extend their responsibility beyond their client. A student learns in law school that the lawyer's duty is to zealously represent the client; however, these lawyers expressed additional responsibilities--to a client's family members, to the opposing party, and to society in general. All of the lawyers practicing domestic relations felt a responsibility to the other family members in their cases, even if this responsibility conflicted with the clients' interests. In dealing with child custody cases, some lawyers felt responsible for the welfare of the children but acknowledged that they were not responsible for the children. Conflicts between client and family interests were resolved by withdrawing from cases, by trying to preserve family relationships, and by counseling clients against taking a certain action. Some of the lawyers in this study felt a responsibility to the opposing party. They expressed the importance of disclosing information to the other side, even though there was no ethical duty to the opposition. Two of the lawyers expressed a responsibility to society. One accomplished this by choosing not to practice prosecution as a type of law because the incarceration of criminals does not solve the racial and socioeconomic bias that is related to certain crimes.

The final pattern that emerged from the interview data is the strategy that lawyers with an ethic of care focus on the client as a person rather than on the legal problem of the client. This was expressed in two ways, by focusing on alternative ways to resolve disputes, and by assuming the role of counselor or educator. Many lawyers in this study felt there were often better ways to resolve legal conflicts other than through the adversarial process central to our legal system. Several were upfront about their feelings toward the adversarial process--its

monetary and emotional costs, as well as the premise behind it. The lawyers who supported alternative dispute resolution also clarified that this method is not always practical but should at least be presented to the client as an option, even if it means losing the client's business.

The lawyers that are person centered also expressed this by being a counselor or educator. Many felt it was important to help their clients clarify what they really want. Additionally, many of these lawyers have become skilled in aspects of counseling, like reading body language clues, understanding the divorce process, and being empathetic. Some expressed the importance of understanding the client's perspective. Others practice interpersonal relations skills, such as establishing a trusting and comfortable environment, listening, and being straightforward, which help them relate to the client. Several of the lawyers articulated the importance of educating their clients. They accomplished this by avoiding legal jargon, and talking at the client's level of comprehension. Others presented options and experts' opinions, explained information repeatedly, and encouraged clients to seek second opinions.

### Discussion

The findings from the interview data provide substantial support for Gilligan's (1982) notion of connection as central to the ethic of care. This conclusion is supported by these lawyers' emphasis on cooperation over aggression, a societal perspective, consideration of implications to all involved, and understanding others' perspectives. The data from these findings, though, contradict conclusions made by Gilligan concerning men and connection. In her discussion on connection as an aspect of the ethic of care, Gilligan relates it only to women. She claims that men value separation and are threatened by connection. She states that "it appears that men and women may experience attachment and separation in different ways and that each sex perceives a danger which the other does not see--men in connection, women in separation" (p. 42). This study found that male as well as female lawyers may possess an ethic of care expressed through the construct of connection. The three major findings and their subcategories and properties provide evidence that lawyers express their ethic of care in the profession of law. Lawyers express their ethic of care by purposefully being selective in their practice in terms of arenas of practice and type of clientele, by extending their sense of responsibility beyond their clients to family, society, and the opposing party, and by being person centered in their relationship with clients. It can be concluded that the ethic of care is inconclusively related to gender. Although there is some evidence to support a relationship between the ethic of care and women, findings from this study, and from empirical studies and critiques of Gilligan's work, do not support such a relationship.

Currently, law school teaches future lawyers to be competitive and aggressive so that they function well in the adversarial system. This study has shown that there are lawyers who are not competitive but prefer to practice using cooperation and collaboration as ways to resolve disputes. By integrating the ethic of care through teaching methods, future lawyers could also learn cooperation and collaboration. Approaching education as learning from actual situations through collaboration will allow different forms of dispute resolution that are not competitive and adversarial, such as mediation, to emerge (Menkel-Meadow, 1988). It is important that law professors understand the different moral orientations that exist among

their students. By incorporating teaching methods based on the ethic of care, students can learn about the differences among them. This will enable lawyers with different moral orientations to harmoniously work together in legal practice.

It is recommended that law schools address the ethic of care by including diverse perspectives of the law in addition to the conventional view. These other viewpoints include critical legal studies and feminist legal theory. In critical legal studies, the law is viewed as mechanical and rule bound, but also as political and discretionary (Fischl, 1987). Students are taught that there is always an exception to every rule, and that the judicial process is overtly political. Richard Fischl states that if law and politics cannot be separated, then "legal actors must be ready to accept personal responsibility for the part they play in the legal system and society at large" (p. 532). Feminist legal theory is similar to the critical perspective in its beliefs. According to Carrie Menkel-Meadow (1988), the feminist perspective differs from critical legal studies because it "starts from the experiential point of view of the oppressed, dominated, and devalued" (p. 61). Law students can be made aware of these perspectives through the curriculum, as well as through faculty who espouse these views.

This study has implications for practice in the area of continuing legal education. The majority of the lawyers in this study felt that law school should include practical education, such as an internship, so that students learn how to practice law. A recommendation can be made that there should exist clinical education in law school, so that students learn how the study of law connects with real problems in practice (Menkel-Meadow, 1988). Continuing legal education is also an important vehicle for providing education beyond basic legal skills so that the lawyer can improve his or her practice. It is recommended that classroom practices and approaches to education utilizing collaboration and practical experiences, as well as differing perspectives on the law, can also be incorporated into continuing legal education. In addition, approaches to education that stress the need for practical experiences to bridge the gap between education and practice can be provided by continuing legal education.

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## RE-ENCHANTING RESEARCH: USING NARRATIVE IN ANTIRACISM EDUCATION

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### Introduction

"Does it sag like a heavy load? Or does it explode?". This syncopated question, quoted in Studs Terkel's book, *Race* (1992), and the truncated narrative of which it is a part, are fragments of a vast and hidden discourse about what racism means to people. Is there a role for these understandings of racism in the design and teaching of antiracism to adults? In this paper I develop a case for reclaiming narrative domains of the everyday as a focus for research in education. I argue that narratives, stories which resonate with particularities of lived experience (Lyotard, 1992), can be divined in both formal scientific theory, as well as in people's descriptions of their lives. An emphasis on stories as media for social analysis is counterpoint to the way modernist theory silences narrative as an 'unusable' base for knowledge (De Certeau, 1988). Deconstructing, or 'unpacking' theoretical works through critical reading, however, reopens them as highly narratized texts, replete with imagery, nuance and seductive devices to arouse the commitment of readers. Whether ideas about racism are expressed in theoretical texts or through people's everyday experience, such reading can make visible the dynamics of contestation, resistance, difference, *jouissance*, play and contingency, which can be used to emancipatory effect in antiracism education. The following pages present highlights of an argument for re-enchanting and re-enlivening research by 'reading', as narrative, social dynamics of theorizing about racism.

### Narrative

Intuitively, "narrative" suggests story, or rather the telling and form of story. It has been claimed that any attempts to understand the world assume the form of stories: we do not merely impose this mold on experience, rather the world comes to us in the shape of stories (Jameson, referenced in Sarup, 1993). This perspective disestablishes modernist presumptions that there is a direct and transparent link between the world and its objects, and human means to understand them. By simultaneously creating and presenting its realities, narrative at once reveals and distorts its complicity in the worlds it creates. It both declares and perverts these worlds through their telling.

In Lyotard's designation, metanarratives are constructs through which knowledge is legitimated; their enunciation constitutes epistemological strategies to supply truth, and refute contradictions (Sarup, 1993). Lyotard argues that metanarratives achieve a single method - denotation, the direct linking of signifier and signified - for arguing truth, and that legitimization is their only epistemological standard and ambition. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that metanarratives use narrative themes to illustrate their legitimacy. This prompts me to argue that while metanarratives establish their claims about how truth is constituted on the basis of certain epistemological epics (cognitivism, empiricism, etc.), they simultaneously appeal to that which they contradict (the libido, say) through rhetoric and other seductive devices of language. One might say they play upon the nostalgic yearnings of modernism: a united 'knowable', and the heroic role of the humanist subject, who can know and be known by using her or his own theoretical devices.

Micro-narratives, on the other hand, affirm their own particularity and partiality; they are about local activities of individuals and communities. Stories about the world are verified, not by outside truths, but by "their own immanent laws of signification" (Zavardzadeh & Morton, 1991, p.133). They differ from metanarratives which require of themselves (at least ideologically) the vanquishing of their "particular cultural identity in favour of a universal civic identity." (Lyotard, 1992, p.34). Narrative knowledge, the knowledge of localities or everyday life, does not restrict itself to the argumentation and proof of scientific knowledge.

Narrative can house a multiplicity of discursive forms (cognitive, persuasive, comic, tragic, etc.), which oblige narrative's "inflatibility" (Lyotard, 1992, p.31) as an argumentative or 'telling' device. Narrative arranges content into sequences of events. These sequences are determined by a particular culture's sense of relations, embodied in the names of things, and in accepted rules of recitation. These insights provide useful guideposts for analysis of both theoretical metanarrative (which I shall demonstrate are replete with stories), and everyday narrative.

### **Theory as Storyteller**

Theory has its own internal ideologies, within which it regulates 'truth', as well as its own telling of truths. Nonetheless, although it claims to obey its own strictures of unidimensional legitimization, disrobing or deconstructing its operations through critique can reveal its engagement with storytelling. In this section I discuss how theory, as part of its strategy to monopolize the legitimation of knowledge through its own devices of authority and discipline (Foucault, 1980), veils its own complicity in its construction and presentation of 'reality' - in other words, how it 'acts' like narrative to legitimize itself, while denying the legitimacy of narrative knowledge. Research and theory in adult education, as in any discipline, tell and retell their own familiar themes and stories. In such recounting, the positions of subject and object, speaker and listener, teacher and learner, are woven into conventional patterns. These patterns and their variations operate as disciplinary precincts within which the objectives and relationships of education (social change, growth, transfer of knowledge, etc.) are defined and patrolled. These patterns or storylines provide a framework of authority within which certain definitions are sanctioned, and others are excluded. In what interests, and by what devices are these centralizations and marginalizations committed? How do these operations of power shape accepted approaches and disciplinary norms within adult education? Discursive operations within theory, and the epistemological entitlement it carries in Western thought, preestablish its truths, the positionalities of its subjects and objects, and its methods of legitimizing those truths and postures.

**Hiding the Known/Concealing the Interlocutor:** Methodologically and politically, the ordinary must be forgotten in the constitution of what is theoretical (De Certeau, 1988, p.61). Given the privileged epistemological status of these discourses, 'theory', as it is known to Western science, prevents to a large measure, the practice of what is known and contested in people's lived experience. For instance, in many theoretical texts, subjects who experience racism, and who originate politically-motivated words and texts, are repositioned as objects, redefined as unknowing and un-acting 'other'. Controlling interpretation and communication of racism as an 'issue', the theorizing expert names objects of discourse (often as 'oppressed victims'), and assigns to them subordinate identities and roles (Fraser, 1989). Examples of this are government or institutional publications, where the 'voices' of people of colour are collected, exoticized and anthologized to advertise liberalized policies of multiculturalism. While the interlocutor of discourses of resistance speaks directly from urgent situations of racialized conflict and crisis, their connections to these events is suppressed in the voice of the learned speaker in theoretical texts. In modernist theoretical materials, truth and objectivity are routinely "offered directly by the narrative" (Rosenau, 1992, p.85) as though there is no narrator, and as though theory contains no narrative. Language is standardized to give the appearance of impartiality, and an uncomplicated rendering of clear, referential meaning. The author's task is to restrict the play of language so as to limit possible meanings available to the reader (Rosenau, 1992). This conceals "the artifice that produces the appearance of objectivity" (Lather, 1989, p.91).

**Positioning Objects and Subjects:** The author of theory positions the players (subjects and objects), establishes their relationships of power, and delimits the contexts of the discourse itself. Resources and tactics include: idioms, vocabularies of interpretation and persuasion, paradigms of argumentation, narrative conventions, and modes of subjectification (Fraser,

1989). But both 'objective' and 'subjective' modernist theoretical approaches obscure their own relationship with their objects and subjects, either: a) in the case of 'objectivity', by overplaying the object's metaphysicality, and stating the relationship as the subject merely discovering or unveiling the object as prior essence; or b) in 'subjectivity', by overplaying the illuminating and liberatory function of the subject with regard to the object, and utterly marginalizing the object beyond the operations of theory (Gruber, 1989).

**Ideologies of Writing and Reading:** To grasp the non-neutrality of theoretical discourse is to view the writings themselves as presenting, clearly or obliquely, theoretical ideologies to readers. In turn, readers must and do, although often unwittingly, engage theoretical texts within particular "ideologies of reading" (Cohen, 1992, p.70). Theoretical discourse can be said to speak hegemonically from within the conventions of accepted truths (Gallagher, 1992). Thus, theoretical discourse not only represents its own power operations, but impinges on and is impinged upon by other types of discourse, as it interrelates with, and interanimates, its readers.

### Modernist Narratives in Theory

Deconstructing theoretical statements about racism can reveal, or at least clarify, subtexts within racism discourses themselves. These subtexts or narratives are the substance of ideological operations that both shape and are shaped by theoretical racism talk (von Dijk, 1991). A good proportion of theorizing about racism is ensconced in modernist epistemologies and ideologies. The result is theoretical explanations that are radically reductive, explaining complex phenomena through single, causative storylines (such as Marxism, critical theory, or psychology). Focusing on narrative can 'smoke out' modernist thematics of progress and determinism, within which are nested the narratives of racism themselves. Below are some themes which are revealed when theories about racism are read for narrative content.

**Progress:** In modernist Western literature the dominant narrative about racism is a conservative interpretation of history as social progress. Society moves from the "barbarity of slavery" (Cohen, 1992, p.71) to an enlightened epoch of race relations led and mediated by white intelligentsia, who wage an "unremitting battle" (p.71) against irrational prejudice. These civilizing processes assimilate the unenlightened demands of the poor and oppressed to the discourses of humanism and rationalism. The storyline produces: "triumphalist narratives", which chronicle the heroic triumph of enlightened reason; a "teleology of the oppressed", where racism marches onward from a point of origin within which its essence is defined; and the "epic journey of emancipation", in which victims of racism trace their own march toward emancipation from bondage, as they alone carry the banner of human progress (Cohen, 1992, p.72).

**Humanism/ Human Subjects:** Acritical suppositions of theoretical and practical humanism (Balibar, 1992), from which antiracism draws moral impetus, are also capable of generating persuasive and authoritarian summons for national unity, religious fundamentalism, self-reliance, and the ethics of economic determinism, nested within the politics of the New Right. Canadian examples are compelling narratives of individualism and fundamentalist values (Bibby, 1990); and economic determinism (Walker, 1989). The schemae of humanism also perpetuate narratives describing and inscribing positionalities of subjects and objects of racism. Often theoretical descriptions portray the object of racism as depersonalized 'victim'. The centrality of agency (cause, intention, conspiratorial operations of economy and class, false consciousness, deviancy, etc.) obviates the possibility of resistance from the now-marginalized 'victim'. Within these humanistic narratives, the subtheme of progress draws our attention to the performance of the subject. The inert victim of racism is often depicted as the demure recipient of malignant racist intent, and/or patient witness to the development of the subject into the self-aware rescuer of a wounded, enigmatic other.

**Perfectibility:** The development of the subject towards a perfectibility defined by the project



of Enlightenment progress, is the product of narrative themes in modernist humanistic theories (Gruber, 1989). For example, where underprivileged black children are theorized as disadvantaged by social structures and the hegemony of the elite, the children (objects of racism) must be rescued by enlightened members of that same elite in a narrative of emancipation. There is no space in this schema for narratives of resistance, because the object of racism is given neither power nor voice in the narrative. In some narratives of radical critique, the whole social order must be thrown over in order for the object to become subject, which at any rate seems to suggest the inevitability of new dominations. The narrative of perfectibility also gives rise to the reflexive self who is illuminated by the telling of a dark truth ("I am a racist"), representing self-rescue by penetrating one's own false consciousness. The confessionality of self-reflexivity appears based on the coercive apparition of the perfect(ible) subject at the centre of discourse, and the aspiring subject's guilt at not accomplishing what she/he knows we are meant to know and be in order to attain the centre.

**Surveillance:** A postmodern analytic of the position of the object in theory draws attention to how instruments of (re)search surveil an object, or discipline the object to self-monitor (Gruber, 1989). Some examples of surveillance in antiracism practices, rationalized by narrative positioning of the human subject/object in theory, are: a) surveilling others, and self-monitoring for racist remarks and behaviour; b) normalizing theories of spatial distributions, such as functionalist theories normalizing ghettoization as 'social distance', theories of education which segregate immigrants as 'language learners', theories of management which experimentally create 'equity enclaves'; c) collecting written records which define and discipline the object of study as a member of racialized groups who are either 'progressing' or not 'progressing'.

Modernist theoretical narratives remain circumscribed by their own teleologies. Yet they are central to the common-sense appeal of antiracism because the structures and operations of racism appear to demand these forms of narrative as means of resistance (Cohen, 1992). I would suggest, moreover that particularist, non-teleological 'micro-narrative' accounts tend to be overlooked as a basis for antiracism programs because they lack hortatory suasion for those bound to modernist versions of the social operations of racism.

### **Everyday Discourse/Everyday Narrative**

People articulate their hopes and grievances in their own vocabularies. Bringing these voices forward in research about the meanings of racism can aid in the transfer of power "in defining the problems and goals of society from the hands of outside experts into those of the members of society itself." (Banduri, quoted in Dallmayr, 1992, p 432). Specific histories of location are expressed through the meanings people construct about things they experience. Sources of knowledge about racism are likely to be media, literature or film, or discussions with peers. As people attempt to regulate and give meaning to their lives, they make both affective and semantic investments (Giroux & Simon, 1989) in what they "know". These investments prefigure learners' production of, and responses to, knowledges generated and encountered in learning situations. If the processes of radical pedagogy depend on insight into learner subjectivities, then educators need to have some way of understanding the meanings and intentions toward learning content that are shaped within learners' lived experience. Information about the narrative accounts people construct about racism can provide insight into the kinds of knowledge in which learners have invested, both intellectually and emotionally. As a controversial aspect of the contemporary social and political landscape, racism is an inescapable referent for most Canadians. People fervently engage with the concept, and rapidly and strategically position themselves in terms of their understanding of what racism 'is'. It is important to find a way of attending to the emotional or passionate elements of knowing racism. These aspects of knowing are particularly important to educators.

**Contestations and Silences:** Everyday knowledge and actions, by virtue of their variation and political disputability, are constituted as sought-after, fought-over, contested, emotionally

invested-in and held (and abandoned) understandings. This is, I believe, what Ellsworth (1992) observed in the defiant voices - "partial, multiple and contradictory" (p. 102), and strategic, temporal coalitions among students as they debated actions against racism on the Madison-Wisconsin campus. To read these voices required a conscious uncoupling from the ideal that lived understandings are either *a priori* or unitary. Because she paid attention to a multiplicity of positions and political imperatives, as well as her own positionality, Ellsworth was able to 'hear' the themes in the discussion. She observed that what was said often depended on people's willingness to commit their energy, and was "the result of conscious and unconscious assessments of the power relations and safety of the situation." (p.105). This example reminds researchers that the production of meaning in local narrative can be momentary and fluid. What is not said often serves to define what is prohibited and withheld in talk about racism. For example, Terkel (1992, p.3) recounts how the words: "Of course, we're moving. You know why", "You know where I stand", and "Before Its Too Late" signaled, but never spoke, their meanings. The first were the words of a white woman reacting to the presence of black families in her neighbourhood. The second were the words of a protester against court-ordered busing in the United States. The third was the slogan of a white opponent of a black mayoralty candidate. These phrases suggest the storylines are so well etched, they need not be spoken.

**The Politics of Narrative:** Re-examining racism as it is constituted in everyday discourse foregrounds a politicality that is usually hidden in 'official' definitions of racism. The politics of race, the changing contours of racist ideologies, can be read within the semantic fields in which these discourses operate (Gilroy, 1990). Housed within the vernacular of the quotidian, which is seldom tapped as a source for theory, is a veritable industry of construction and contestation of meanings. People's opinions about racism can be viewed as (obscured) subtexts of theories and social practices, which can be identified, thematized and problematized through critical research that focuses on narrative (Fraser, 1991; Lather, 1991). It makes sense to examine, for example, the way liberal/humanistic definitions of racism (e.g., 'racism' as absence of social harmony) are disciplinary concepts (de)limiting what is sayable about racism in daily discourse - the way, for instance, people avoid the word 'racism', and talk instead about 'race relations', 'ethnicity', or 'cultural difference'. Examining local narratives about racism can also unmask the normalizing effects of institutionalized and structured racism - manifested, for example in acceptance of the explanation that the major reason people of colour do not rise in corporate hierarchies is because they have low self esteem (Manzo, 1992).

**Speaking and Fighting:** Focusing on narrative in research is appealing because of its emphasis on the forms and politics of telling. Considering local understandings shifts the locus and onus for defining racism. Theoretical and 'official' discourses generally control the project of defining racism. It follows that these sources are looked to for defining solutions for racism. Yet these very power networks (government, institutions, professions) are constituted on the basis of racial dominance (Li, 1989, Bolaria, 1988, Goldberg, 1993). Official knowledge already carries the stamp of authority, and hence subjugates other knowledges (such as discourses of resistance, and 'street talk' about racism). Historical and localized knowledge is disguised or dismissed, and disqualified as inadequate or insufficiently elaborate to be officially 'credible'. If, as Dallmayr claims "to speak is to fight" (1992, p.439), then the words people speak from their experience can represent the struggle for or against particular concepts of racism. Foucault's emphasis on ruptures, discontinuities and epistemic breaks (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) underscores the importance of decentralized practices and local resistances in liberatory movements. He favours arenas of power 'at the extremities' as sites for political analysis and action. This approach privileges local narratives, and endorses "untheoretical sorts of narrative discourses which make up the political speech of Western democracies." (Rorty, quoted in Dallmayr, 1992, p.439).

**The New Right and the Old Left:** Antiracism educators should pay attention to how the New Right recharges regressive social ideologies by appropriating everyday narratives in which

yearnings are expressed for past utopias that never existed - for example, Canadian anti-immigration campaigns that seduce recruits by harking back to the golden days of full employment, no welfare, and 'family values'. These popular narratives work by reducing "complex questions of politics, values and meanings to individualized images of morality, self-sacrifice, victory and community." (Grossberg, 1989, p. 113). The Left's romance with entrenched structuralism and idealized and heroic agency is myopic. It misses the liberatory potential of studying the 'dirty words' of history communicated through the decadent media of popular culture, and in other voiced and textual manifestations of the everyday. Possibilities for radical, emancipatory antiracism education may lie in understanding how people are expressing views about racism in the face of the hyperstimulative pastiche of postmodern images and messages. An example is Benetton's advertising campaign which (literally) capitalizes on airing stark and shocking images suggesting social marginalization, environmental degradation and violence.

**Bodies and Voices:** Attention to the popular reunites the falsely divided realms of ideology and corporeality. When people position themselves with respect to meanings of racism, their ventures are mediated as much by desire and the corporeal, as they are by intellectual and semantic aspects of knowing. (Eribon, 1991). Expressions of ideology, it can be claimed, are made as much by the body as by the mind. Racism is, after all, inescapably focused on the corporeal: as such, it manifests itself, as do sexism and homophobia, as body knowledge, along with its many other presentations. Another insight into the politicality of quotidian knowledge concerns the anti-hegemonic workings of orality. Understanding how orality "insinuates itself into the network of a scriptural economy" (De Certeau, 1988, p. 132) requires awareness of how oral expressions arising from everyday experience are (de)valued within spheres (such as the academy, government, the judiciary) where written production of ideas of history, society, truth and value takes place. In Western societies, oral knowledge is evanescent ephemera in the "scriptural economy" of knowledge and meaning.

### To the Future

Through narrative, the voice of the other becomes controllable, a territory that is not to be confiscated (hooks, 1989). The 'other' assumes a face, sexuality, a geography, becomes identifiable as colonized peoples, blacks and minorities, religious groups, women, gays and lesbians, working class people. The liberalized rhetoric of decadent modernity is challenged by these voices (who now occupy their positions of marginality strategically, as positions of power [hooks, 1989; Spivak, 1990]). They recuperate their voices, and protest against the use of the position of other as "a mask, an oppressive talk hiding gaps, absences, that space where our words would be if we were speaking, if there were silence, if we were there." (hooks, 1989, p. 151). To focus on narratives of everyday life is to go against the grain of how knowledge is valued in Western social science, which decrees: to be understood, it must be written; how it is enunciated and by whom determines its value; it must have a strategic function and be possessive of the power needed to realize this function. Looking at local memory and community truths constitutes an intervention in the traditional means of knowledge production, through the act of "raising up previously disqualified modes of truth" (Roseneau, 1992, p. 85). How this may look in theories about racism has barely been explored. New autobiographical expressions of position and difference (This Bridge is Our Backs, Rivers Have Sources, Trees Have Roots, The Issue is 'ism'), the momentary creation and occupation of spaces of resistance and solidarity in social activism, and the challenging of fundamental assumptions of positionality in art, literature and the social sciences by postmodernists (-colonialists, -structuralists), appears to be keeping the question sufficiently open. New modes of 'freeing' discourse seem to be emerging. Some are pressing for new ways of conceptualizing racism and antiracism as intersecting with the multiple, politically-charged subjectivities of gender, sexual orientation, and class.

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Note: References will be distributed at the Conference.



## INTEGRATING AGENCY AND STRUCTURE IN PROGRAM PLANNING THEORY

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**Abstract:** The paper proposes a way to theorize program planning in adult education that integrates planner discretion and the structural conditions in which planners must always act.

Most models for adult education program planning offer a set of principles but fail to explain how planners can act practically in the messy, though normal, world of organizational and social power (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). We propose a theory of planning practice that seeks to integrate this false dichotomy between planner discretion and structural constraint. It does so by arguing that planning always operates in two dimensions: to construct an educational program and to reconstruct the power relations and interests of the people involved.

### RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

Nearly all models for planning programs for adults have treated power and politics as noise that gets in the way of good planning. In so doing these models set up dichotomies between rationality and politics or, more generally, between individual planners and the social structures within which they must act. As a result of the emphasis on generic planning steps as a problem solving strategy, most program planning theory does not account for what really matters about what adult educators do in their daily work. By characterizing planning as a social activity of negotiating interests, we try to make sense of what Bernstein (1983) calls a grand either/or: either planning is a technical, rationally-ordered, and logically-comprehensible process, or it is the "hustle, bustle, and nastiness of politics" (Forester, 1989, p. 4) and therefore not amenable to the demands of logical thinking and acting. The problem is that while much planning theory is helpful in prescribing the technical processes of practice, it generally falls short of saying how to accomplish these processes in the world of power relations and interests. In short, most planning theory does not provide an adequate depiction of the messy, though normal, world in which adult educators must act. To meet this challenge, our theory seeks to integrate a knowledgeable social actor into the socially structured settings of planning practice (Giddens, 1979; Lave, 1988). In order to situate the paper's claims, we next briefly review some characteristic planning literature and identify two central problems.

The first problem is that most models assume that planning programs is a matter of applying the same generic set of procedures in all situations. This approach, which is built upon Tyler's (1949) work, proposes a familiar five-step process that begins with needs-assessment and ends with evaluation (Sork & Buskey, 1986). Such planning models, being based on a comprehensive scientific rationality (Forester, 1989), ignore the effect of context on the planning process. Indeed, the strength of these models is that they are viewed as applicable to all



situations and contexts. This approach of decontextualized planning procedures has been mediated by a concern that the context does indeed matter in carrying out these steps. Houle (1972) first expressed a concern for context with his two-part planning system in which he proposed that the "categories of educational programs" profoundly affect how the steps are actually carried out. More recently Brookfield (1986) has argued that most program development models are unable to account for the organizational context in which "personality conflicts, political factors, and budgetary constraints alter neatly conceived plans of action" (p. 202). Many contemporary planning theories attempt to incorporate the issue of context into the planning process (for example, Boone, 1985; Langenbach, 1988). Based on their review of all existing program planning models, Sork and Buskey (1986) proposed a "generic planning model composed of nine specific steps," one of which was the "analysis of the planning context and client system(s) to be served" (p. 89). More recently, Sork and Caffarella (1989) refined this notion to argue that "those who work within these settings usually understand how contextual factors influence their work" (p. 235), which they identified as organizational history, mission statements, resource availability, competitive environments, and community relations. These approaches do little to improve on conventional models because planning is still conceived as following a set of procedures or addressing a set of decision points (Houle, 1972). Addressing the context simply becomes another step in the planning process, just one more step to address. Although the impracticality of the conventional models is recognized (Brookfield, 1986), the logic and tasks of the Tylerian approach are still privileged (Sork & Caffarella, 1989).

The second problem is that even contextually-sensitive planning theories offer an under-theorized, and fundamentally naive, view of the relationship between planner action and social context. Giddens (1979) would argue that this weakness should not be surprising because the social sciences are plagued by "the lack of a theory of action" (p. 2). He proposes that "an adequate account of human agency must, first, be connected to a theory of the acting subject; and second, must situate action in time and space as a continuous flow of conduct" (p. 2). The failure of the social sciences to integrate these issues has resulted in a dichotomy between "voluntarism and determinism," or as we argue, between planner discretion and social structure. Although it may be possible to analytically separate the issues, this separation fails to provide important insights about our ongoing social practices. To remedy this Giddens (1979) characterizes social life as the "duality of structure" by which he means the "essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social practices: structure is both the medium and the outcome of the reproduction of practices" (p. 5). Giddens main point is that we cannot understand the acting subject, the planner, separate from the social circumstances because action takes place in the interaction between the two rather than in their separation. In our view planners are not free agents, able to choose any course of action they want (as suggested by existing planning theories,

even those that include an analysis of context). Nor are planners' actions utterly determined by the social and organizational structures in which they work. The problem that needs to be addressed, then, is how to integrate the knowing and acting planner into the socially structured world of practice. In order to develop a theory of action that integrates planners and their settings, we need a theory of the context. Lacking these elements, we simply cannot develop a theory of responsible planning which is of central importance to the field of adult education.

#### INTEGRATING AGENCY AND STRUCTURE IN PLANNING PRACTICE

The purpose of this section is to introduce a language that accounts for what program planners must do in their everyday practice. To the central issue posed by Giddens (1979) of how to integrate the acting subject into structured social settings, we have proposed an understanding of planning practice as a social activity of negotiating interests in contexts marked by relations of power. We do this by developing three central concepts on which this view depends (power, interests, and negotiation).

#### Power--The Socially Structured Capacity to Act

Beyond rather unspecified injunctions to analyze the organizational context, most planning theories are remarkably silent on how planners are to act within their contexts. Our starting point is that planning practice, like any other human interaction, must be seen within "the enduring social relationships" (Isaac, 1987, p. 51) that support or constrain planners' actions. Giddens (1979) argues that power, the socially structured capacity to act, is a central feature of these social relationships: "action only exists when an agent has the capability of intervening, or refraining from intervening, in a series of events so as to be able to influence their course (p. 256). While action is the result of human intention, the ability to act is a structurally distributed. In this view, power is the capacity to act distributed to individual planners by virtue of the ongoing social relationships in which they participate (Apple, 1992; Isaac, 1987). Importantly, however, this socially structured capacity may or may not be exercised on any particular occasion. This distinction is crucial because it provides a basis for integrating planner discretion and structural constraint. It does this by placing planners' action at the center of power, as the exercise of power; it also places power at the center of planners' action as the property that makes action possible.

The first important feature of a planner's power, or capacity to act, is that it exists as a feature of certain enduring social relationships (Isaac, 1987). This does not deny that planners actually possess power or that they exercise it in actual situations. The important point is that planner's capacity to act is rooted in sets of historically-developing social and organizational relationships and is not a consequence of individual attributes. A second feature is that power is a characteristic of all human relationships and is not specific to a particular form of relationship, such as that in which one person gets another to do something she would not otherwise have

done. Power is not a one-way relationship in which one person gets another to do something in a stimulus-response fashion because it always involves some reciprocity among those involved. As Giddens explains, "However wide the asymmetrical distribution of resources involved, all power relations manifest autonomy and dependence in both directions" (1979, p. 149). Thus power is not something to be given or taken away because it is always being negotiated. A third feature is that planners' exercise of power is always contingent. Although the pre-given structural capacity to act is relatively stable, exercising power in concrete situations is always a form of negotiation among the various people involved. Thus the outcome of planners' exercise of power cannot be pre-determined. By arguing that planners must act in a social world structured by historically-developing sets of power relations, the theory begins to meet the challenge proposed by Giddens to integrate agency and structure.

#### Interests--At the Center of Agency

If power relations provide the terrain on which planners' must act in constructing educational programs, we next turn to an understanding of what direction they seek to travel on this terrain. To speak of the power of the planner, is to indicate what planners can do, "where doing is understood as performing a practical activity according to certain understandings and reasons" (Isaac, 1987, p. 76). These reasons, or ends to which action is directed, are called interests. Interests, which direct the actions of all people in the planning process, are complex sets of "predispositions, embracing goals, values, desires, expectations, and other orientations and expectations that lead a person to act in one direction or another (Morgan, 1986, p. 41). Interests, then, are the motivations and purposes that lead people to act in certain ways rather than others when confronted with situations in which they must make a judgment about what to do or say. In a direct sense, interests are the human social purposes that give direction for acting in the world (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Habermas, 1971). It is important to see that there is no necessary connection between planners' specific interests power distributed to them by virtue of their place in a social or organizational setting. Interests are, however, centrally involved in the exercise of power. All those involved in planning a program exercise their power in accordance with their own concrete interests. In other words, all educational programs are causally related to the specific interests of the people who planned them. Of course, to say that programs are causally related to concrete interests does not mean that a program is utterly predetermined because, as pointed out in the previous section, the exercise of power is always contingent. Our point is rather that power relations structure the terrain in which people must act and their interests are their motivations for acting through that terrain.

#### Negotiation--As the Characteristic Activity

Although we have characterized the social components of planning, we next need to account for the action dimensions of practice, or as Giddens would say, we need to turn this portrayal



toward a theory of the acting subject (in terms of interests) in a socially structured terrain (in terms of power relations). In order to make the direct connection between planner discretion and structural constraint, we argue that negotiation is the central form of action that planners undertake in planning programs. Planners always negotiate in two dimensions simultaneously. First, and most obviously, their actions construct an educational program. For this, we draw upon the conventional usage of negotiation, which is defined in Webster's New World Dictionary (1976) as "to confer, bargain, or discuss with a view to reaching agreement" with others. Within this conventional usage, we can say that planners always negotiate with their own specific interests and power and negotiate between the interests of other people in any planning process. Planners not only bring their own interests to the planning process (negotiate with) but they must constantly negotiate between others' interests to construct the educational program. Second and at a more fundamental and encompassing level, planners also negotiate the interests and power relationships themselves. People's interests and power relationships are not static, but are continually being acted upon by the negotiation practices themselves. This means that not only do planners negotiate with and between interests, they also negotiate about the power relations and interests. Planners' actions, while directed toward constructing educational programs, are also always reconstructing the power relationships and interests of everyone involved (or not involved) in the planning process. As Forester argues, "Every organizational interaction or practical communication (including the nonverbal) not only produces a result, it also reproduces, strengthening or weakening, the specific social relations of those who interact" (1989, p. 71). We are arguing that power relations and interests always both structure planner action (negotiation) and are reconstructed by these same practices. In sum, planners both act in and act on their social contexts when planning a program.

As planners act, they can expect to construct the visible educational program that will affect the world in a certain way and reconstruct, less visibly, power relationships and interests in regard to "knowledge (who knows what), consent (who exercises power and who obeys), trust (who cooperates with whom), and the formulation of problems (who focuses on or neglects which problems)" (Forester, 1989, p. 80). Planning practice always operates in these two dimensions, which are seamlessly connected, because planners cannot operate outside the social and political relationships among the people involved in the planning. Even when planners are dealing with technical matters, such as which facility to use, how to design a survey, or how much money to charge participants, the judgments in these areas are structured by the social and political relationships of the people who make them. Thus, acting-in-context to construct an educational program is not possible without acting-on-context in terms of who can make the judgments necessary to construct the program. Our central claim is that planning practice, as embodied in the activity of negotiating interests, is as much an action on the world in terms of reconstructing social and political



relationships as the educational program is an action in it. We hasten to add that while the impact on power relations and interest may be less visible, it is no less important. Previous research (Cervero, 1984; Cervero & Wilson, 1994) shows that experienced planners understand that their practice has two outcomes and actively work toward both. Once we grasp this essential duality of practice, we can see what Giddens (1979) means by "the essential recursiveness of social life" and why social theories have to offer an understanding of the acting subject in a structured context.

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THE VIEW FROM BENEATH THE CEILING:  
THE LINK BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE  
FOR WOMEN IN MIDMANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP ROLES

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**Abstract:** This study examines the leadership experiences of midmanagement women in light of major themes in the women's developmental literature.

We began with the glass ceiling. Professional women usually end there, so it seemed a logical place for us to begin if we wanted to know something about women in leadership. It wasn't hard to imagine the women packed in there, jockeying for space, straining to move forward. Like millions of lottery players, each hopes in spite of the statistics that her number will be called and her life fill suddenly with rich possibilities. Those aspiring to leadership roles must content themselves with midmanagement positions, recognizing that only a miniscule percent of women are elevated to CEO positions. Leadership for the vast majority of professional women means being responsible for only a portion of the organization and always being answerable to others higher on the corporate ladder. So our musings about women in leadership began here.

We wondered about the nature of women's leadership at this level. While there has been some serious speculation about a style of leadership characteristic of women, empirical research has been limited. Furthermore, the research that has been done focuses on the extremely small number of women who attain the highest levels of leadership (see, for example, Helgesen, 1990). We know very little about women's ways of leading in the context most familiar to women--midmanagement.

Over the past twenty years or so a significant body of feminist literature has begun to be assembled within the social sciences. It is common now to think of women, in comparison with men, as having "a different voice" when dealing with moral issues (Gilligan, 1982), or a distinct "way of knowing" as learners (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986). These sorts of essentialist or gender models are themselves rooted in the literature of lifespan development; the claim here is that the experience of women and men differs significantly, in large part because each follows a different path of psychosocial development. This body of literature became the theoretical frame of our study and generated two questions for us: (1) Is there a women's leadership style? And (2), If there is, are its features congruent with the characteristics of women's psychosocial development?

To deal with these questions, we will first outline the major themes of the literature on women's development and on women

leaders. Then we will describe our study, present its major findings, and briefly discuss their implications.

### The Framework from the Literature

The traditional theories of development, such as those by Erikson (1982) or Kohlberg (1973), assume that adult development is a universal phenomenon with particular phases or stages that must be successfully negotiated in order for a person to be recognized as a fully functioning or mature adult. When women are measured against these frameworks, they usually come out deficient or underdeveloped, and only recently have we recognized that the problem lies not in women but in the frameworks themselves. Because these theories were generated from research with all male subjects and written from the perspective of male scholars, extrapolating these findings to women is highly questionable.

This situation has given rise to a growing body of developmental research focused specifically on women, either by applying traditional theoretical models or by proposing entirely new ways of thinking about women's development. A review of this literature reveals several common themes. [See Caffarella, 1992, for a more detailed review and discussion.]

Three major themes emerge in the literature: the importance of relationships as central to the overall developmental process, diverse and nonlinear patterns of development as the norm for women, and intimacy and identity as issues of continuing importance throughout women's lives. Scholars tend to agree that the more traditional models of development do not and will not fit very well as explanations of the lives of women. One key assumption of those theories, however, does seem relevant to women's development: identity and intimacy are issues of prime importance to women, although how these are defined seem to vary from the traditional adult developmental literature. A single linear pattern of psychosocial development appears to be almost the antithesis of what might be termed the "norm" for women. Rather, women's development is characterized by multiple patterns, role discontinuities, and a need to maintain a "fluid" sense of self. The importance of relationships and a sense of connectedness to others appears to be central to the overall developmental process throughout a woman's lifespan.

When the literature on women in leadership is reviewed, a similar pattern emerges. As in developmental theory, a male model is assumed here. Of particular interest to us is whether the themes from women's developmental literature are repeated here. The idea of the centrality of relationships for women leaders emerges as very important. Women leaders in both the public and private sectors see as critically important being involved with the people with whom they work. Many women leaders adopt a participatory management style, with collective action as the goal. The second theme of diverse patterns of development is also found in the professional careers of women. Many women

enter positions of leadership much later than men because of an employment history interrupted by family responsibilities. The third theme, the on-going importance of identity and intimacy, is discussed far less in this literature, though it does appear. Identity is constructed more as finding the authority of the self, and intimacy is presented as negotiating the balance between work and family. All three themes in this literature merge to create a portrait of professional women's lives as complex and diverse, offering both opportunities and challenges.

### Taking Up the Question

Our objective in this study was to listen to the voices of women in leadership roles in order to assess the linkage between their experience and the major themes suggested by the developmental literature on women. Is relationship of critical importance to their functioning as leaders? Do they follow career paths that are linear or nonlinear in character? And what is the importance of identity and intimacy in their careers? Our focus was on women in midmanagement positions, those essentially clustered beneath the glass ceiling.

Because little is known about this area, a qualitative study was appropriate. We selected a purposive sample of 25 women in midmanagement leadership positions in varying contexts. "Midmanagement" is a relative term, implying a supervisory role of some kind situated within a larger organization to which she is accountable. Since we studied women in a variety of organizational contexts, we chose to define as midmanagement those positions viewed as such by each organization as well as by the people involved. The women in our sample ranged in age from 38 to 54, with most in their 40's. About half are in educational institutions, the remainder in corporate settings and in nonprofit institutions. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with each woman. These were tape recorded and transcribed. The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method.

### Some of the Answers

We grouped our findings according to the three themes structuring our study: the centrality of relationships, nonlinear patterns of development as the norm, and the continuing importance of identity and intimacy in these women's lives.

The role played by relationships is evidenced in the participatory or collaborative style of leadership favored by the women we interviewed. One woman described hers as "one of consensus building and teamwork" and likened it to the traditional model of the family to which most women of her generation were socialized. Another spoke of creating a supportive climate: "It's figuring out how you help every person to feel that their needs are going to be met and that they are important." There can be a downside to participative leadership,



however, as several of our women pointed out. One said, "Making others feel as if they are a part of the organization can sometimes be viewed as an inability to make decisions." Our women seemed realistic about the pluses and minuses of this style.

Another dimension of this collaborative leadership style is its sensitivity to context. These women spoke often of the need to adapt their approach to specific situations as they arose: "I model what I see to be necessary in the situation because each one is different depending on the surroundings, depending on your environment, depending on the people you're working with. I have to adapt." And they frequently noted that their leadership style has evolved over time, shaped by their varied experiences. One woman could identify some of her major changes: "I have learned to be a listener and I have learned to accept and encourage others to make decisions." Overall our study suggests that collaboration is a more natural way for women to lead.

The second theme from the literature was nonlinear patterns of development, and that was expressed in our study in terms of the type of career path the women experienced. The nonlinear patterns of career development were the norm for these women, especially if they were married in the early years of their professional lives. Their employment history was often interrupted by the demand of family responsibilities. Only those women who remained single had a more linear career path; this is congruent with other studies of professional women (see, for example, Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988). But both groups spoke of the importance of staying flexible in order to benefit from opportunities for advancement. This was stated best by one woman who had this advice for young women entering her field: "Always be on the watch out. Don't build your plan so structured that you get blinders on and fail to see opportunity or that you're afraid to go ahead and take advantage of them." The willingness to take risks characterized the women we interviewed.

The women frequently spoke of obstacles or barriers in their career paths, both institutional and attitudinal. The glass ceiling was brought up alot, indicating that it is a reality for them that they take for granted. One woman who was a Protestant minister spoke of this matter-of-factly: "If I were a male, I'd be a senior pastor somewhere, but I just pulled out the statistics and looked at the realities of congregations that are calling women in senior pastor positions, and it's just not happening. It's probably going to take another 10-20 years...." Several mentioned sexual harassment as an issue, but more pointed to attitudinal problems coming from some male colleagues. One woman expressed this memorably:

The older colleagues that I have to deal with, whose only relationships with women are as mother or daughter or lover....they don't know what to do with me as a colleague, and so some will be paternalistic, some will be inappropriate. Some treat me as a sister, but even that

tends to be a little demeaning. I'm patient with them only because I don't have to work with them that often.

Other barriers were expressed in terms of expending extra effort. There was the theme of needing to work harder than men: "As a woman, I found I always had to work harder, longer, and I've always had to confront situations in order to get what I need. It's never been handed over and I've always had to pursue it." And then there was the familiar theme of repeatedly having to prove yourself. One woman said that this was her most difficult obstacle: "This may sound sexist but a man doesn't have to [prove himself]....A woman can screw up and they'll say, 'I told you so.' A man can screw up and they never think about it. You just let a woman or a minority foul up once, they'll say, 'Never again!'" These various obstacles are on-going and serve to intensify the nonlinear character of the career development these women leaders experience.

The third theme in the developmental literature on women, the on-going importance of intimacy and identity issues, did not appear strongly in the leadership literature but was a sustained theme in our interviews. The women spoke about developing an authentic way of leading, and this was an evolving process for them. For some that was imaged in terms of voice, expressed by one woman most forcibly as her personal credo: "That I will constantly seek the truth and speak it as I believe it to be, even in the face of opposition." Others spoke in terms of authentic action: "It's very important to me to...be yourself and have integrity about your life." Interestingly, a number also spoke of a lack of self-confidence. One confessed: "I'm constantly fearful that somebody's going to find out that I'm a phony down deep inside." There seems to be a real tension between these positive and negative forces within many of the women we interviewed.

Intimacy issues were expressed in the expected concerns of balancing professional and personal lives, much as the literature suggests, but we heard another theme related to the personal toll of leadership for these women. One woman said flatly, "You need to be realistic about what you're going to be asked to give up" and concluded that any woman who takes on a leadership role must "plan on sacrificing [her] personal life." Another woman, a university administrator, made the same point anecdotally:

We had two couples over last week and one of the other women is also a leader on campus. During the course of the conversation she would say, "Well, that was back when I had a real life." She said that about three or four times over the course of the evening. I could identify with what she was saying because that's one of the things about leadership and administrative positions--they will absorb all of your available time. You have to define what you're willing to give....Part of my reasoning for not wanting to be a president or some visible leader like that is because I feel like I'll pay an even higher personal toll.

For all the women we interviewed, the issues of identity and intimacy were seen as both problematic and sources of strength. Our findings overall strongly support the connection between women's developmental theory and practice in the lives of women leaders.

#### What It All Might Mean

Probably the least surprising of our findings is the relational style favored by women leaders, reinforced as that is by socialization for all women. More dramatic is the series of losses to both women and their organizations created by formal policies and informal practices towards women. The glass ceiling may prohibit the advancement of most women leaders, but our findings suggest that a toll is exacted from women at midmanagement levels as well. Inhospitable climates negatively affect women and, by implication, limit the contribution they can make to their organizations. Overall our study suggests that practices of organizational life, designed by men to benefit themselves, do not fit women and are, in fact, hurtful to them.

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# FROM SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING TO POSTMODERNIST THOUGHT IN ADULT EDUCATION: RELOCATING OUR OBJECT OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

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**Abstract:** This paper makes a case for abandoning the "andragogical consensus" and its pedagogical trappings (a.k.a. SDL). Questions are raised about the potential of postmodernist critique and its denial of reason.

"The time has come, the Walrus said,  
To talk of many things:  
Of shoes - and ships - and sealing-wax --  
Of cabbages and kings

- Lewis Carroll

The education of a free people will  
always be directed more beneficially  
for them when it is in their own hands  
- Thomas Hodgskin

They wept like anything to see  
Such quantities of sand:  
"If this were only cleared away,"  
they said, "it would be grand!"  
- Lewis Carroll

## Juxtapositions and Portentous Signs

The April, 1968 edition of Adult Leadership published the text of a speech entitled "Androgogy Versus Pedagogy" (Knowles, 1968). This article, announcing "a new label and a new approach" which distinguished adult education from conventional schooling, marked out the course along which modern, professionalizing, adult education practice in the U.S.A. had been developing for over a decade (See, for example, Houle, 1956). Significantly absent from the article was any reference to the momentous political and social upheavals which came to a head in 1968.

On January 11, 1991, just before the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf, a newspaper article by the eminent postmodernist thinker and critic of mass culture, Jean Braudillard, asserted that the war could never happen (Norris 1993). According to Braudillard, talk about war had become a mass media simulation exercise which would unfold before us via TV images. Signs of war -- just as in video games -- now substitute for the real event. Subsequently, Braudillard (1991) sought to explain in an artful postmodernist vein that the Gulf War has not taken place.

Abandoning any vestige of adult education as a social movement, the positivistic modernist discourse on modern adult education defined by Knowles simply fails to address momentous contemporary global events. Need we be concerned? For postmodernist Braudillard, these events are merely simulacra (leaving aside, of course, the *real* deaths, the *real* mutilations, the *real* acts of violence inflicted, and the *real* suffering experienced by *real* human beings).



## Self Directed Learning and the Professionalizing Tendency

From the notion of andragogy (the spelling changes slightly between 1968 and 1970), as "a new label and a new approach" for modern adult education practice, has emerged a substantial professionalizing pedagogical discourse on self-directed learning. A plethora of self-directed techniques and strategies (most notably, the learning contract) focus sharply on the individualized learner as the primary object of professionalizing practice and research. With self-directed learning, the perceived needs of the individualized learner assume greater significance, and come under closer scrutiny, than the activities of the teacher. The teacher becomes a mere *facilitator* and the adult student a *client*.

Within the consensus that formed around andragogy, self-directed learning has served virtually as a linch-pin holding together aspirations to professionalize the field of practice and research. According to Cervero (1992), the move to professionalize is inevitable and should be accepted with a view to taking advantage of the options it makes available. Collins (1992) questions, in moral and political terms, the efficacy of the tendency, noting that it has failed, in any case, to provide jobs, job security, and dependable incomes for adult educators as a whole.

In any event, the literature originating from the initial text by Knowles (1972) effectively constructs self-directed learning as a primary methodological device which instrumentalizes an important common-sense understanding that adults can learn, or learn better, without unwonted pressure from directive pedagogues. (This insight about self-directedness is shared by many committed school teachers with regard to their students. And, as with andragogy, self-directed learning in schools is often thoroughly instrumentalized via the formal learning contract.)

Instrumentality and individuation are integral to the psychologized notion of self-directed learning. These tendencies remain intact despite supportive commentaries from within the andragogical consensus that call for the appropriation to the discourse on self-directed learning of a concern for social context and critical thinking. In the case of self-directed learning, the medium is the message (McLuhan, 1967), and the driving force is technical rationality.

A more thorough account of the inter-connections between self-directed learning, individuation, psychologistic influences, technical rationality has been developed elsewhere (Collins, 1991). Suffice it to note, at this juncture, that the tendencies have not cleared the way for Thomas Hodgskin's foundational aspirations (opening quotes) for a modern adult education practice. Rather, the trappings of self-directed learning have masked the needs for such a move.

## Critical Cross-currents

In an essay on "Adult Education and Social Change," Raymond Williams (1990) portrayed two forms of adult education. Adult education as "the bottle with a message in it, bobbing on the tides and waves of history" (p. 154) aptly represents the passage of andragogy bearing self-directed learning within the mainstream. Alongside the mainstream runs a course inclined to make adult education part of history itself (the social change process). This marginalized trend is exemplified, these days, in the pedagogy of Paulo Freire and, formerly, in Thomas Hodgskin's founding aspirations for the mechanics' institutes.

It is adult education in the mainstream that is experiencing the effects of critical cross-currents. During the past fifteen years mainstream adult education theory and practice has incorporated a number of studies which directly challenge the pre-eminence of psychology as its guiding discipline. This challenge is posed initially against positivistic psychology but, ultimately, also against humanistic (for example, Rogerian and developmental) forms of the discipline which focus narrowly on individual characteristics. The trend away from psychologism is discernible from the increase in research journal articles and conference proceedings papers on phenomenology, hermeneutics ("qualitative research"), and critical theory. They constitute a growing awareness of the artificial constraints imposed on theory and practice - and on adult students and teachers - by an ideology of technique. These artificial constraints are manifested in

self-directed learning techniques, competency-based curriculum modules, conventional approaches to needs assessment, program planning and evaluation, positivistic research methods, and a pervasive professionalizing ethos. And from a small but significant influx of feminist studies, pragmatically incorporating various non-positivistic orientations, an understanding of modern adult education practice as a predominantly "malestream" endeavor has been articulated. Andragogy, it now seems, is far from being androgynous.

Not all of the non-positivistic and critical discourse in modern adult education appears in theoretical form but it can be informed by, validated or grounded, in theory. In this regard Frankfurt School Critical Theory, especially that of its contemporary leading exponent Jurgen Habermas, has been influential. In contrast to the instrumental rationality of psychologistic orientations to modern adult education practice and research, "qualitative" perspectives are concerned with the identification of meaning in context, inter-subjective understanding (communication and ways of knowing), and the expression of ethical concerns. Critical theory seeks to illuminate social structures and practices which thwart attempts to realize a level of communicative competence necessary for genuinely democratic participatory decision-making. The critical social theory of Jurgen Habermas, culminating largely in his Theory of Communicative Action (1984, 1987), refers us to a notion of communicative competence that can be approached via a *process pedagogy* that is not steered by technical rationality. Habermas's differentiation between life-world and system world, and his account of practical and emancipatory interests, provide insights into what locations and practices are possible for the kind of pedagogy envisaged by Freire and Hodgskin. Further, Habermas's critical social theory suggests that there is still a *reasonable* prospect for the discovery of a *rational* basis on which to (re)construct an emancipatory practice of adult education. At the same time, encounters with critical theory make it clear that modern adult education practice has been effectively commodified and given over largely, though not entirely, to the interests of managerial bureaucracy and corporate enterprise.

### Postmodern Tendencies (Deconstructing Andragogy)

The scope of critical discourse in modern adult education practice is broadened with the advent of narratives influenced by postmodernist thought. Drawing in large measure on Nietzschean philosophy (especially in the case of Derrida and Foucault), postmodernism lays stress on power relations and the will to power as primary motivating forces. The connection is made between power and what comes to be constituted authoritatively as knowledge. Through *deconstruction* a primary task for postmodern discourse is to unsettle all authoritative claims (including those of critical theory) about how we should understand, and act in, the world.

The potential of many points of view and many voices are acknowledged in postmodern discourses. At the same time the structures and relationships of power which combine to block these voices and viewpoints are illuminated. Accordingly, postmodernist thought is invoked around the struggle for the right to be heard. On this account, postmodernism provides a critical perspective, along with critical theory, for adult educators seeking to challenge the dominant discourse of status quo interests. However, postmodernist critique spurns any quest for identifying *rational* grounds on which a process for social change can be developed.

Within mainstream adult education, postmodern insights have been nicely incorporated within a feminist discourse to reveal how patriarchy constructs the field of practice as a whole, determines its institutional arrangements, and shapes the learning processes (see for example, Schick 1993). Foucault's research, especially, is useful in highlighting the constraining function and hidden agendas of conventional practices in adult education (Collins, 1988). And recent studies by Sallie Westwood (1992) and Derek Briton and Don Plumb (1993a, 1993b) point to a role for postmodernist thought in transformative research and the critique of mass culture.

While providing us with insights of great value, there are discernible limits to what postmodernist thought can offer a practice of adult education which aspires to be part of the social change process. Braudillard's portents of a mass media determined hyper-reality leave us with no standpoint from which to choose sensibly between one course of action and another. There is no

truth to be found, only a plurality of signs, styles, interpretations, and meaningless process. Postmodernism is not a new tendency (it is a recurring theme within art, literature, and philosophy). At this juncture, it is premature to come out against postmodernism in adult education. It can be *reasonably* appropriated as a dimension of our (modern) times.

### Looking at Learning Again

A quarter of a century after Malcolm Knowles' essay on andragogy as a "new technology," Stephen Brookfield (1993) published an article re-making the case for self-directed learning and linking it to "the critical practice of adult education." He noted that "self-direction is now comfortably ensconced in the citadel, firmly part of the conceptual and practical mainstream." The evidence is impressive!

We have so many people working on self-directed learning that their numbers support a Commission of Professors of Adult Education task force on this topic, and an international symposium devoted solely to research and theory in the area. (p. 227)

By this account self-directed learning has surely been constituted as a central focus of study within the academy of adult education where it connects to a professionalizing ethos.

Brookfield argues that "reframing the concept of self-direction as an inherently political idea comprises an important strategic opening in building a critical practice of adult education." In light of the critique advanced against self-directed learning, Brookfield's arguments are nicely presented. However, given what the exponents of self-directed learning are inevitably about, his proposal pre-figures a move from the commodified notion of SDL, Inc. to a commodification of "the critical practice of adult education."

From a critical perspective, the problem is not with self-directed learning itself (should there be any other kind?). Rather the concern is with the reification of self-directed learning in support of dubious professionalizing aspirations and the deleterious effects, via its instrumental rationality, on the learning processes. Relevant engagement with contemporary social and political issues can, and should, occur without the deployment of self-directed learning as technique or strategy. The idea of "facilitating" self-directed learning which Knowles recognized ordinary wide-awake adults already possess ("to be adult means to be self-directing") makes no more sense than comfortable pedagogical chatter about empowering people. For a critical perspective on adult education the initial task is to identify social structures and practices which (mis)shape social learning processes and undermine capacities adults already possess to control their own education.

Brookfield's earlier significant contribution to the self-directed learning discourse called for the inclusion of a concern for social context, but even with this more sophisticated understanding, self-directed learning as a pedagogical strategy remains thoroughly psychologized. This tendency remains in the project to reframe self-directed learning as an inherently political idea. The interesting examples of how a pedagogical discourse, ostensibly empowering, can be advanced via self-directed learning, describe a process to personalize the political.

In this regard, the recent critique advanced by Colin Griffin (1991) regarding the perspective transformation and social problems discourse in modern adult education practice is on the mark:

[There] seems to be a lack of any sense of the irreducibly "social" in human life -- a sense of historical, economic, and cultural forces that shape possibilities for and the meaning of individual growth and transformation. (p. 268)

For Griffin this shortcoming could be relevantly addressed through the study of adult education practice and adult learning processes from a sociology of education standpoint. Such an undertaking would be helpful (studies on the sociology of education are plentiful) if a sociology of



adult education helped us clarify what role we *should* play as adult educators in the generation of learning needs and in the social change process. For Brookfield, and those he cites in support of his argument, are ultimately concerned about the *agency* of the adult educator in today's society.

### **Shifting the Professional Gaze**

The time has come to shift the focus of theory and practice away from the "adult characteristics' episteme [which] neglects the social, cultural, and political dimensions of adult education" (Welton 1987). Returning this focus onto what we are as practitioners and researchers in adult education does not entail neglecting a moral commitment to adult learners. The commitment is affirmed in reasons we identify for a hopeful emancipatory pedagogy. With this end in view, we need to maintain on-going critique, and to identify sensible strategies, for resistance against repressive curriculum formats which are sustained through dubious professionalizing agendas. In the context of "friends educating friends" (Collins 1991, pp. 48-49) adult education should be concerned with vital social issues of today's society which have been significantly absent from the andragogical discourse.

As the gaze shifts from an unremitting focus on the situation of the adult learner to the education of the adult educator, new challenges are presented to graduate programs in adult and continuing education. A (re)search for relevance around what modern adult education should now be about can relieve the siege mentality brought on by unrelentless cut-backs in publicly funded education. Strategies to effect a conjunction of knowledge production in the academy with popular education and progressive community-based initiatives should be part of the fight-back. And adult education can make the case for normative position taking from theories of action which understand that we are not at the end of history.

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## EVOLVING THE METHOD: GROUNDED THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF POST-HOC ANALYSIS

Sean Courtney, Wayne Babchuk, & LaDeane Jha

### Abstract

In a study of student experiences in an ABE/GED program, three researchers collaboratively engaged in a process of learning grounded theory (GT) while simultaneously conducting research on a population of adult learners. This paper reports the conduct of the study, paying particular attention to how participants were sampled, how the coding evolved, and how the eventual theory emerged. The paper concludes with some reflections on the practice of grounded theory research.

### Evolving the Question

A problem had been presented to one of us: Using interviews already conducted with a group of students, develop a qualitative theory of the causes of drop-out from an ABE/GED program. GT was chosen as an appropriate methodological orientation to the data for a number of reasons. It is a popular form of qualitative inquiry. It demands less pre-planning, and thus by implication less premature closure of the domain of inquiry, than occurs with the more quantitatively-oriented qualitative approaches, e.g. Miles & Huberman (1984). At the same time, it has more procedural structure built into it than, for example, naturalistic inquiry. It is conducive to taking a "plunge" into the data while yet engaged in design considerations. Finally, it calls attention to certain aspects of human interactions without committing the researcher to a cultural perspective, as is the case with the more traditional ethnographic approaches.

Despite our determination to be qualitative, our first questions tended to follow very conventional lines: What were the causes of dropout? Could current dropout be traced to lack of clear goals? Was it a function of dropout from high school? None of these questions, however, reflected a GT perspective, nor did they suggest what it was about this study that was particularly qualitative in nature. For example, all three of us had read a particularly rich protocol of one young woman, which revealed fascinating "experiential" data; she expressed a lot of nervousness being in the program while demonstrating an interesting depth of understanding as to what it meant to be a learner. At the same time, it wasn't exactly clear what dropping out from the program meant to her.

Experience with this case raised a number of questions, the kinds of questions we felt a grounded theorist would ask: When is dropout complete or final? Is it always a "big deal?" Is it always or even ever thought out? This process moved us from a concern for the *why* of dropout to the *how*. How does it occur? What does it mean to the individual man or woman involved? In other words, while *why* questions were naturally important, they were by no means the only questions one could ask of the "phenomenon" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). After much discussion and what we can only term a "trying on" of various versions of the central question, we determined that what

we were really after were the ways a student makes sense of being in an ABE/GED program: what does it mean to be a learner in a GED program? What do you do? Who do you do it with? What is the role of the teacher? etc.

### Evolving the Design

#### a. Theoretical Sampling

A key feature of this study was our use of a post-hoc sampling design to generate data. In a typical GT study, analysis occurs almost as soon as the first set of data are acquired. These preliminary results are used to deliberately select where the researchers should next turn for corroborating and contrasting data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued formally for this methodology in their landmark introduction to GT, while subsequent researchers have stressed the importance of sampling as a way of elaborating and grounding the theory (e.g. Smith & Poland, 1976). While studies using post-hoc analysis are infrequent, they are permitted under the tenets of GT (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and receive explicit endorsement in a number of publications (Strauss, 1987; Schratz, 1993).

From a pool of 2323 students, enrolled in an ABE/GED program in the capital of a midwestern state, 45 students had earlier been selected for intensive semi-structured interviews. It was from this latter pool of participants that we selected our GT sample. Our approach to theoretical sampling was as follows. We began with one protocol, which yielded some basic categories. From this we branched out with two more protocols, different from the first, not only by the fact of gender, but more importantly because the latter were generally negative not only about their experience with the GED class, but also, it seemed, about the whole business of learning.

We met continuously to work on the "organizing system" (Tesch, 1990) for generating categories, conscious of the need to have a rationale for selecting future protocols before we had advanced too far. In this way, we developed a preliminary coding scheme for seven of the 45 protocols. At this point we attempted to write up a rationale for future case selections. Since we were still engaged in open coding we were in the period of, what Strauss calls, open sampling. This contrasts with "relational" sampling associated with "axial" coding which is aimed at extending and clarifying the nature of relations between categories, what Strauss (1987) has called the "coding paradigm."

After further discussion in this area and with increasing familiarity with the data, we began to discuss the relevance of the teacher and class site to the emerging properties and themes. At one level, it seemed obvious that how a teacher of G.E.D. approaches her job will have a lot to do with how a student of G.E.D. experiences his or her class. So we gave thought to case selection based on identity of teacher. This occurred at a time when teacher-oriented categories were beginning to take hold with increasing certainty.

We produced a profile of each of the 45 cases, listing each according to demographic background (e.g. age, sex, etc.) and program-related factors (e.g. what site they had attended, who was their teacher, how long they had stayed, etc). More importantly, we went through each of the protocols to get a sense of how involved or connected they were with the class and to what degree this class tended to remain a group of isolated learners (one of our themes had become "islands of learning") or to have been formed into a loose group of students working together and perhaps helping

each other. This turned out to be a fortuitously significant division of the cases. At the time, however, we felt uneasy about our decision, principally because, while motivated by intuitions about the importance of learning environment to the overall GT of the G.E.D. experience, it was not directed by specific emerging categories and so seemed to violate tenets of the GT philosophy. (It took a subsequent reading of Smith & Poland, 1976, rather than Strauss & Corbin, to clarify the basis upon which future cases are to be theoretically generated.)

The decision to select cases according to the degree of integration within the group led us to the construction of a matrix, each cell of which generally yielded a single subject. We then proceeded with finalizing our categories within a GT framework which emphasized the phases of being in the program (see below). Once the category list was completed, we began to saturate the categories more self-consciously. This added more cases for a final sample of 14, the cases upon which this study is based. Quasi-triangulation was accomplished by visits to GED classrooms, discussions with teachers and the reading of teacher protocols obtained for a different study.

#### b. Coding: Open

Categories emerged and were finalized in four roughly distinct phases. In the first, "open coding" involved us in analyzing each and every distinct linguistic fragment, e.g. word, sentence, as a "concept-indicator" (Strauss, 1987). Concept indicators bundled together initially as "concepts" and later as "categories." During this phase, also, we attempted to distil the "properties" and "dimensions" of each concept/category. Examples of categories in this phase were: characteristics of attendance, goals, engagement with class, etc. At this point, though our coding net had been flung quite far and included dimensions of GED-related experience both within and outside of the classroom, it seemed that the most important categories were those to do with what went on in the classroom, what the teacher did and how the student felt about it, and what the student did and how she/he felt about that.

During phase two, and reflecting Strauss's dictum that GT is about actions and interactions, we began to focus on the actions of the teacher and student with respect to each other and others around them. From this emerged two critical categories: learning management (what the teacher did), learning work (what the student did), and a number of less key categories: program trajectory, goals/expectations, classroom environment, etc. Now however we encountered a problem. As we began to unravel the exact dimensions of the teacher's routine and non-routine actions, we realized, first, that we were seeing these through the eyes of students, and, second, that this focus on the teacher was taking us away from our initial quest to determine the dimensions of the student's experience with GED. While we did carry out a limited set of observations in this area, as noted above, it was not our intention to focus on the teacher and subsequently we abandoned (for this study at least) our efforts in this direction.

#### Finding Our Story: Axial and Selective Coding

The period of open coding often coincides with an activity, called axial coding, in which the researcher attempts to create density in the data by focusing on relationships between categories. During phase three of our attempts to establish a categorization scheme, we returned to an earlier discussion that being in the GED classroom involved a



"first impressions" phase, as well as a "being-in-class" phase. Categories began to coalesce with greater logic, as we began to divide the protocols into a "beginning" phase, "after the beginning", to be followed by "routine" and the "social context of learning."

Our attempts to conduct axial coding on these categories, however, were not particularly successful. Axial coding involves what Strauss calls the "coding paradigm" when the categories, isolated up to now, are re-integrated. Here, the researcher attempts to connect categories to each other as, alternatively, conditions, contexts, strategies and consequences. Dissatisfaction with some of the categories generated in this fashion led to the final phase of categorization when the current list of twelve categories emerged divided into two phases: Entering the Class and Being in Class. (See Courtney, Jha & Babchuk, 1993 a, b).

### Writing our Story: Grounded Data and the Uses of Theory

Grounded theorists have a mixed attitude to the uses of background literature and theory. Some, like Strauss, seem comfortable with the idea that theoretical concepts drawn from related problems and disciplines may provide vital labels for categories as well as direct the focus of the researcher. Others, by contrast, go so far as to demand that the researcher eschew the literature before reporting his/her study (Glaser, 1978). For us, it was decidedly refreshing not to have to keep referring to other bodies of work since we were keen to approach the problem of the ABE/GED classroom from a fresh angle. Nevertheless, we were familiar with work in this area, not least because one of us, Jha, had authored a thesis on retention and dropout from literacy programs.

The lack of an explicit conceptual framework became a problem, however, when we turned to the writing of our "story", (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Strauss and Corbin talk about identifying and committing to a "story line". The story is based on the emergence of a "core" category, which in tying all of the other categories together becomes the grounded theory. We experienced difficulty settling on one core category and, for a time, despaired at ever arriving at an all-encompassing theory of the data.

At a very early stage we appeared to have identified one such "spin" on the data. More than one of our subjects compared what was happening to her with earlier school experiences. Statements like: "It's not like school" or "It was like being back in fifth grade" occurred often enough to attract our attention. At the same time, we could not detect a GT-type category here. In the interests of progress we developed a number of themes (Thompson, 1992) and considered hypotheses (Parker & Gehrke, 1986) in lieu of a full-blown theory. GT literature was also consulted to see how others were reporting their data (e.g. Kozma, 1985; Rennie & Brewer, 1987).

As the need to discover a central underpinning of our data became more urgent, we returned to this quasi-category and began examining its fit as a core category, according to the arguments made in Strauss and Corbin. A core category might be one of the listed categories or it might be a category of higher abstraction. This seemed to work for the dichotomy, like school/not like school. Second, it worked wonderfully as a condition, context and consequence of many of the main categories. Finally, from whatever angle we viewed it, the main story seemed to be about how men and women of various ages and backgrounds dealt with being in a setting which bore a resemblance to high school, a resemblance whose varying quality determined how they reacted to the setting and the possibility of relationship within it. While not excluding other stories, this comparing and

contrasting of GED with schooling struck a powerful chord throughout the data causing it to come alive in hitherto unnoticed ways (Courtney, Jha & Babchuk, 1993 b.).

### Reflections and Feelings

Though one's research career need not end with it, GT is a felicitous way to begin one's socialization as a qualitative researcher. While nothing can quite prepare one for the terror of that first round of open coding when, to paraphrase Inspector Clouseau, you suspect everything and you suspect nothing, persistence yields fruit. And in the process, the presence of order, indeed the very idea of some kind of method, becomes the important scaffolding to prop up the edifice that is one's eventual accounting of the phenomenon. In all of this, company and collaboration is everything. The opportunity to share misconceptions as well as insights and to try on failure while experiencing triumphs is one of the unexpected joys of doing qualitative "work."

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Reproduction and Resistance in a University Graduate Program of  
Adult Education: Developing Ideological Space for Program Transformation  
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*This study explored transformation within a graduate program. The data support the conclusion that ideological space and program transformation can be forged to support a non dominant ideology and resulting diversity in the student body. Transformation triggered countering regulatory processes within the university but not in the faculty.*

This research explores empirically the twenty year development of a graduate program in adult education and to identify the sites of contestation in that development regarding goals, curriculum and process. We took as our starting point the sociological analysis of Rubenson. Rubenson argues 1) that adult education in North America is based on an ideology of psychologism emanating from a consensus view of society and 2) that a conflict based analysis and the examination of social change is a better way to see the "possibilities" of the education of adults.<sup>1</sup> The questions we asked ourselves were 1) to what degree is the Northern Illinois University (NIU) graduate program reproductive of extant power relationships? 2) to what degree have we in our development been predominantly psychologistic and consensus oriented? 3) has there been evidence of resistors in the program? 4) what have been the points of contestation and the power issues which were contested? 5) what social relationships were challenged and 6) is there evidence of social change in the program?

We used Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the role of organic intellectuals for creating or challenging hegemony as analytical tools.<sup>2</sup> We accepted Habermas's critique that technical rationality can colonize our life worlds and that education based on technical rationality is only one way of knowing.<sup>3</sup> We saw communicative rationality and ideal speech as a way of promoting participatory democracy and self realization (which we take to be the ultimate goals of education). Accordingly, we were more interested in the social construction of privilege in society than the analysis of an individual's deficiency when critiquing the problems of adult education. We endorsed the analysis of the primary privilege "triplet": race, gender and class but enlarged that analysis to a fourth, imperialism/colonialism, since national and trans-national relationships affect our everyday lives as well as those of the international students we enroll.

We felt that a case study of a graduate program which had a history of twenty years and which is characterized by some as being different would let us examine the potential of being educators for change. We generated data from a review of documents, memos, minutes of the program, data analysis of student activity, interviews of key actors in developing the program, and our own data as participants and observers involved over the years (17 and 9 respectively) of formation.

### Context

The development of the NIU graduate program can be divided into three periods. Identity formation (1970-78), maturation and challenges, (1979-87) and diversity (1988-93). Classes were begun in 1969 and officially approved programs occurred at the masters level in 1973 and the doctoral level 1977. Two major external contracts fueled the rapid development of the program: ERIC Clearinghouse (1974-76) and Adult Basic Education Staff Development (1976-88).<sup>4</sup> Full-time tenure track faculty numbered 6 in 1978, 9 in 1988, and 12 in 1993. Student hour production in classes increased 57% from 1978 (882) to 1991 (1382). In January 1994, there were 438 active majors (229 doctoral; 209 masters); 194 doctoral students were graduated between 1975 and 1993.<sup>5</sup>

The identity period was characterized by internal concerns such as obtaining degree authority,



tenuring the faculty, recruiting the students, determining priorities, and conceptualizing the curriculum (as opposed to listing courses). For example, the program design was patterned after Moorhead State with a large number of courses.<sup>6</sup> Twenty four master's courses initially proposed were consolidated into ten and four more added to make a reconceptualized curriculum during this period.<sup>7</sup>

In the second phase (1979-87), faculty turned to external activities: leadership in national, regional, state organizations, developing an international base, editing journals, and establishing associations.<sup>8</sup> The master's degree was externalized to six locations with about half of the courses taught on load off campus.<sup>9</sup> Continuing professional education (CPE), voluntarism, learning to learn, liberatory education, and human resource development were new courses taught in this period. Two professors came and left and their major concerns, CPE and adult development, came and went with them. The move of these two strong researchers to another university brought a reality to what had been a charmed existence. It was the first time the faculty had experienced a set back.

The latest period (1988-93) is characterized by diversity and struggle for renewal. Strong faculty rapport and emphasis on shared group decision-making is hard to maintain when a six member faculty doubles in size. Diversity of students, always a concern, became a defining point in the program. A new Department Chair, committed to social change, joined our faculty. A new delivery system, cohorts of about 20 to 30 students, with a fixed curriculum dominate this period. Qualitative research and critical theory impact the curriculum. Three aspects of the curriculum are elaborated: HRD, learning to learn (LTL) and critical pedagogy. There is a graying of the faculty at a time when the higher education system is being downsized.

Three discourses emerged from the data: technical rationality, diversity and global contexts.

### **Technical Rationality**

Early in the program the decision to have a physical presence in Chicago, 65 miles from campus had a strong influence on the program. The faculty were concerned in securing the program by fighting continued hostility on campus towards the new program. Antagonisms developed as well over adult education's challenge to the College of Education that defined education as public schooling (NIU developed from a teachers college). Accordingly, it was students working in the Chicago Service Center who became the first organic intellectuals to challenge the faculty engrossed with building a respected program with high standards. In this early period, students challenged the discourse on technical rationality and knowledge production.<sup>10</sup> This challenge continues. Among student's challenges were resistance to logical positivism that had absolute hegemonic control within the research department of the college. The AE faculty had successfully challenged required foundations courses but not the required research courses. Doctoral students were encouraged to enroll in research courses offered in the history, anthropology, and philosophy departments if their interests were not in experimental or quasi-experimental design.<sup>11</sup> Masters students were limited to a required positivistic oriented course. A "qualitative" research course was pioneered by an adult education professor in 1988. In 1993, the research course requirements were opened up to other methodologies for all students.

By 1979, because of student pressure and with the growing influence and adjunct professorial talent in the Lindeman Center,<sup>12</sup> a number of new courses was introduced: participatory research, pedagogy of the oppressed, liberatory curriculum, adult education in Africa, and voluntarism. Some courses were taught only once but this prototypical development of special topics courses continues. For example more recently, qualitative research, critical pedagogy, political economy of adult education, ontologies of research paradigms, critical ethnography, Chinese history of education have been taught for adult education students. Further, students pressured for permanent changes in the basic curriculum particularly with regard to social policy, sociology and philosophy.<sup>13</sup> Student/faculty

teams initiated permanent curricular changes by developing core adult education courses. These included the social context of adult education and policy studies in adult education. A philosophy professor who took a joint appointment with AE developed courses on phenomenology of adult education and human science and adult education.

In 1990 an adult education faculty member took the lead in developing a Qualitative Research Group which met monthly across university faculties and with help from department faculty has successfully challenged the educational research hegemony located in the educational psychology department. Students organized a bulletin, Historical Foundations of Adult Education, to challenge the ahistorical nature of the field and worked with persons like Stubblefield of VPI to promote critical history. In their dissertation research students challenged mandatory continuing education, psychological based participation research, competency based education, and the institutionalization of adult education.<sup>14</sup>

The social change resistors were not the only intellectuals challenging the curriculum. HRD and LTL intellectuals made significant curricular changes. A strong discourse has been built in each which some believe to stand ideological opposed to the liberatory, sociological, naturalistic, interpretive stream. Others decry such polarization on the grounds that, both HRD and LTL do incorporate elements of this stream.<sup>15</sup>

The LTL discourse was an extension of a faculty member's research concerns with participatory training developed at Indiana University. LTL emerged early (1976) as a core idea and became a permanent course in the NIU curriculum in 1982. The concept was elaborated as having applications for learning and teaching in a wide variety of contexts. Though essentially focussed on learning and meta learning processes, contextualizing was increasingly stressed. Thus according to proponents, it had implications for the learning and training of community leaders for social change as well as HRD, school learning, and workplace literacy. LTL has been critiqued elsewhere as technology.<sup>16</sup>

HRD developed in 1979 when ASTD organized a conference on graduate study for trainers. The impetus for making HRD explicit in the NIU curriculum arose from three faculties with help from a new Dean; its elaboration has been a shared venture with students being active proponents. A thriving HRD network brings together graduate students faculty, alumni, and professionals in the fields.<sup>17</sup> Though HRD is criticized by some as learning for earning, its proponents argue:

"At NIU, HRD goes beyond human capital theory and performance-based learning to incorporate principles of adult learning and development. Emphasis is placed on worker participation in decision-making, as part a strategic plan that initiates and implements change in an organization. The ultimate aim is the creation of a dynamic learning organization."<sup>18</sup>

### Diversity Discourse

The recruitment of students of color started at the beginning of the program. It was African Americans on the advisory committee who forced the issue of NIU placing its external Service Center in Chicago. Though many wanted it in the western suburbs, the African American leadership mounted strong pressure to serve the larger diverse urban population. Two African Americans and one Latino graduated from the master's program prior to 1976, the same year the first African American was admitted to the doctoral program. Other firsts in ethnic admissions to doctoral study were: Asian American in 1977, Latino American in 1980, and Native American in 1990. All 53 international doctoral students, except 5 Canadians and 5 Europeans, came from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean or Latin America; thirty-four (64%) have been enrolled since 1987.<sup>19</sup>

African Americans and Latino enrollment increased markedly in the doctoral program, starting in 1989 with the cohort development. In 1993 the doctoral program had 37 percent African, Asian, Latin and Native American, 9% international students of color and 54% Caucasian. While the student body is diverse, to date there is only one tenure track faculty member who is not white Anglo.

The diversity in the student body has caused changes in the doctoral research being done. For example in the first five years of the program the clear majority (64%) of dissertation topics were about learning or institutional analysis and for the most part in a logical positivistic paradigm; in the next five years CPE predominated (23%) with 35% in learning and institutional analysis. In contrast, during the last four years (90-93) the above three areas accounted for only 22% of the topics while one in five dissertations (19%) reflect racial/ ethnic concerns. New categories appearing in the last 4 years are topics on feminism (5%) and internal analyses of personal phenomena (5%). Afrocentrism informs six of these dissertations. The structured silences in adult education history on contributions to and participation of marginalized groups in adult education are addressed in 15 dissertations. Further, gender and race in particular and at times social class as constructed privilege appears as overt topics in over one third of all courses taught in 1993.

Students have been proactive in organizing structures to help them impact the field with their agendas. For example, African American and the international students have taken major leadership to organize two national preconferences to the AERC as well as caucus groups at NIU. About a dozen advanced doctoral students of color have taught an undergraduate class for one or more semesters; an African American, Asian American and Latina have each held a temporary assistant professorship faculty position for one or two years.<sup>20</sup>

Colloquium speakers when the program was new were mostly well known professors in adult education and all were caucasian and mostly male. In the last five years at least half of the Colloquium speakers have been African Americans (several with an afrocentric viewpoint), Native American, feminists, or international speakers from "the south." Ten of the 27 visiting scholars spending time at NIU have come from Asia, Africa, or Latin America. Many of the 27 came as social critics and contributed to the dialog on marginalization and curricula distortions; others tended to affirm what is. Initiation of these visits was by both faculty and students.

### Global Contexts

"The biggest difference I found in the NIU program after being away for four years was the international students. They bring a whole new perspective."<sup>21</sup>

The internationalizing of the student body and in some cases the curriculum is the third major discourse we will discuss. In 1979, the first of 16 successful study tours abroad was held for groups of 10 to 30 students. Four formal exchange programs were established: Finland (81), China (86), Saskatchewan (87) and Chile (92); these exchanges have cosponsored four transnational conferences (2 at NIU) and a distance education project with Finland.

HRD has been at the core of several international projects. Finnish training directors have made four extensive campus visits and twenty-two CEO's from the USSR attended a two weeks symposium on HRD and HRM at NIU; in 1992, sixty adult educators met in Shanghai to examine HRD.

LTL became a transnational discourse with two conferences held at NIU in 1986 and 87. Fourteen and thirteen experts respectively from Sweden, Yugoslavia, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom and India met to share ideas about theory building in this subject area. Two books and several other publications have resulted from this cooperation.

The social change group is strongly linked to the International Council for Adult Education. A \$100,000 Kellogg grant to promote south-south research was jointly administrated by NIU/ICAE. The ICAE Participatory Formation Newsletter is published by volunteer faculty and students. A three year naturalistic group research project, resulting in a submission of a manuscript, China-Town in a University, was developed by a faculty member and six Chinese students. An African and a Caribbean student initiated book ordering for the library to bring the collections on Africa and Afrocentrism up to par. An African student has edited a book on Participatory Research in Africa. The UNESCO Institute has given a contract to a Zambian professor (doctoral student), who has



established a working group of other students--from Haiti, Trinidad and Nigeria--to study the effects of structural adjustment on adult education provision in selected countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

"I came to NIU for three reasons. First, this faculty allowed me to design the program I wanted.

There were no hoops. Second, it is the only one in the midwest that is open to my work and I wanted to stay here. Third, NIU gave me financial aid."<sup>22</sup>

Because there are social change activists at NIU, there has been a natural recruitment of international students who reject neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism. Such students have assisted faculty to develop a political economy course first taught in 1993 and to initiate a strong dialog on "development" and imperialism.

### Conclusion

The NIU curriculum is both reproductive and liberatory. The ideological space for a counter discourse appears to be a function of: student resistance; faculty members with a commitment to democratic social change that goes beyond reform, a faculty committed to increased diversity in race and social class; an "outside" liberatory organization like the Lindeman Center, a strong bonding of faculty allowing toleration of opposing ideologies; a large program providing space for ideological differences. Initially a strong advisory committee and faculty who listened to their voices set the stage for diversity and program innovation.

The cohort strategy would not have developed without a new department chair committed to social change. The fact that many faculty see adult education as a vocation rather than a career forces a strong attachment to the adult education field and strong bonding. This may thus limit their vision for change. There is clear evidence in the formative stages of the program of the preoccupation of faculty with external legitimacy, standards, student faculty achievement, and competition for high-rank among peer programs. To gain these things openness to innovation was valued but much of that innovation was challenging university and academic, not societal structures.

The localization of the power struggle is currently within the university. Antagonism between the regulators and the more open style of the adult educators is becoming more strident. The argument over quality is covert and underneath but at times overt. Titles of dissertations became a regulatory device when some school teachers were allowed into the program. While some "keepers of the dream" saw as a virtue opening the university to the disenfranchised (other gates were not open), the keepers of the gate saw that adult education was not secondary education. If these high school teachers are interested in working in their community with parents to change a Puerto Rican--Mexican American school losing 75% of their teenagers, who defines adult education? In the 1981 review process the faculty was criticized as not having a focus even as it was in 1970. It is not clear how focus was defined.

There is evidence of social change. There have been changes in what is being studied in dissertation research, in the formal curriculum, and in some cases the classroom. Women students have challenged and clearly changed some male faculty in their attitudes on gender.<sup>23</sup> However, gender issues tend to reflect the liberal feminist analysis. The intersection of gender and race has only recently emerged as a contestation and there has been no open discussion to date on heterosexism.

Have social relationships been challenged? We have commented on the faculty--student and the graduate school - faculty tensions. Another challenge has been to what used to be a predominantly white student body. Students from the military bases have said they felt they could not wear their uniforms on campus; men have felt attacked by the feminist discourse; and some students say they are intimidated by the international and overt counter discourse in the curriculum. These are students who are being silenced by those who are trying to find voice and this becomes a new oppression.



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10. Discussions with David Castelanos, Susan Davenport, Michael Collins, Fred Schied, Sean Courtney and Phyllis Cunningham.
11. Niemi interview
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LET THE BROTHERS SPEAK: AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN DESIGNING AN  
INCLUSIVE LEARNING PARADIGM THAT TRANSFORMS AN URBAN COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Sammie M. Dortch

ABSTRACT

Professor and learner collaboration through authentic discourse is a key to African American men discovering their "voice," and engaging in paradigm design that will increase the men's sense of inclusion in the urban community college culture. The future of the institution and of the workplace are linked to this process.

Authentic discourse is essential to discovering the barriers that African American men perceive to reduce or block their access to classroom experiences, and to their feeling as if they have no "voice," i.e., as a people, and as men who have influence (through the spoken and written word) on the American society. This discourse is also central to collaborating with the men on designing a paradigm that increases their sense of inclusion in the urban community college culture. Their presence in the classroom is increasing in importance. The impetus for the shift in priority seems to be driven by the emerging partnership between the adult and continuing education mission of higher education and the workplace. This partnership also provides a cost-effective way for the workplace to respond to the demand for literate and technologically skilled workers.

The challenges the urban community college will be forced to answer are not limited to how the institution will meet the demand for higher technical skill levels. Workplace decorum, workplace retention, and the development of effective workplace relationships will also be critical focus areas.

African American men's existence under the "veil of silence" denies the instructor and the learners the richness of the perspective each brings to the culture. Barriers to learning and "being" can result in a process where nothing "comes out" and nothing "comes in." In other words, the learners neither speak nor listen to those who are speaking to them as if they are the objects of the experience as opposed to the subjects.

This "voicelessness" has been created by the men being relegated to living on the margin of the American society. It has truncated their creative energy. Too often, in its place can be seen a simmering rage that periodically seethes out in the form of diminished participation in the classroom and in the society; full blown self destruction; or frustrations that are expressed through their wreaking havoc in their own community or the broader society. "Voicelessness" results in an inability to connect with, and to influence others through the articulation of one's thoughts. This "state of being" has a particularly negative impact on the African American community, because our very sinew has its origin in an oral culture. When marginalization is coupled with being excluded from the "inner circle" in a male dominated society, African American men often

have difficulty knowing where they fit--both inside and outside of their community.

#### "VOICELESSNESS" AS A MALE PHENOMENON

Belenky, et al (1986), Gilligan (1982) and hooks (1989) largely identify "voicelessness" as a woman-centered experience. However, it is clear that men, whose opinions are not sought and utilized, discover that not only do others not hear them, but that they cease to hear themselves, because they no longer speak of things that have power, of things that result in birth and death, and rebirth. Instead they pine away longing for meaning and place in the very society that has forced them away from its center to its margin. It is not long before the sound of the rage drowns out the inner voice. The men's voices become silent because for so long they have often fallen upon the insensitive ears of the hegemonically oriented broader society. This withdrawal animates the "warrior" energy (Moore and Gillette, 1992). However, it is turned inward where it is most likely to bring destruction to the interior of the men. In the contemporary society they do not have external outlets for this "warrior" aspect of their being. There are no legitimate dragons to slay, nor damsels in distress to be rescued. Therefore, self becomes the battle ground.

Asante (1987), a major proponent of Afrocentricity, eloquently describes the importance of the spoken word when he writes about "nommo," the generative and productive power of the spoken word. He believes that it is difficult for African Americans to escape internalization of self as a negative being. The English language itself calls attention to the "inferiority of blacks," e.g., blackball, black Friday. Asante purports that the American society's world view is Eurocentric which means there is an exclusive perspective. Thereby, it lacks the ability to "see" from several angles. He calls for a "cultural reconstruction" in order to incorporate the African perspective as a part of an entire human transformation (p. 5). Out of this same argument he contends that because the realities are not shared the notion of the universality of the Eurocentric perspective is incorrect. He promotes the Afrocentric perspective because it is structured in such a way that it is inclusive of other world views. It is this inclusiveness that beckons the African American men to invest in themselves, in learning, in sharing, in creating, and in being.

Voice must first be heard and affirmed by others. This process signals to the men that the knowledge they produce is worthy of being heard. They then can begin to listen more carefully to what is generated within themselves. The men reclaim ownership of the discourse from their narrow perch on the margin. After years of silence the sound of their voices comes out in a roar. Not only are European American men frightened by the sound; so are women and children, and the African American men themselves. Through practice they learn to adjust the volume, because it is not volume that was needed, it was voice--the ownership of and the sharing of knowledge from the place where



they find meaning and being.

The African American men who find voice no longer seek the permission of others to speak, be it European American men or erudite professors who act as if they are the purveyors of all the knowledge that is worthy of possessing. They speak when there is an inner urgency, or simply a nudging to do so. Speaking may occur when the men are discovering or producing knowledge in their own "organic intellectual" manners (Gramsci, 1985), or when there is some injustice being heaped upon another marginalized victim, or when they encounter an egregious error in the historical account of their people's beginning and subsequent journey into the American diaspora.

#### FROM SILENCE TO ROAR: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO DEVELOP VOICE?

It's simple, yet complex. The process of entering into meaningful discourse begins with the professor's own comfort with discourse that he or she does not control. It is more than verbally inviting African American men to speak in the hallowed halls of the academy; especially since heretofore they have not been invited to speak outside of them. The men are frequently suspicious of this sudden opportunity to enlighten others. Furthermore, they find no comfort in the fact that their history is omitted from the texts chosen for the class. Equally as interesting is the fact that neither race nor gender are barometers that result in comfort. The academy itself is often viewed in negative ways. The urban community college is seen as the institution of last resorts. It is rumored to be a place that is not "user friendly," but one where the participants are likely to be "cooled" (Clark, 1980) or pushed out. It is also rumored to have substandard curricula. Even the most determined African American men can have some trepidation and uncertainty about becoming a part of the "revolving" door syndrome that they have heard so much about. When a fellow African American is encountered on the other side of the desk, the men hold their breaths until it is known whether or not they will be recognized as kindred spirits, or whether they will serve as an example of how "fair" the professor is to "all" the students in the class. It is not that the men expect preferential treatment, but they do want to feel that there is hope for them because one of their own is in "charge."

Creating an environment that is conducive to adult learning is essential when one of the goals is "finding voice." It is helpful to change the physical setting so that the class sits around a large table, or in a circle. Discourse is difficult when there are rows of chairs that only allow for a view of the back of the heads of others with whom you are expected to have quality interaction. Large classes can be structured so that the participants work on small group projects. This maximizes the participation level. The findings of the smaller groups are discussed in the larger group. Regardless of the content of the course, cooperation is one of the outcomes sought. It also behooves the "teacher" to recognize that there may be discomfort because the men are often outnumbered by the women in many of



the non-science and math classrooms. This dissipates when men are intentionally placed in each of the small groups.

The content of the discourse may begin with the sharing of the format of a participatory learning environment. Although there is a syllabus and there are institution as well as course driven learning objectives, the process by which these are achieved can be a collaborative effort. There is often reluctance or even resistance to this call for voice. This occurs because the participants, when in school, are accustomed to a "traditional" learning paradigm where the discourse is controlled by the one who has been labeled "teacher."

The psychological structure of the classroom must reflect the social, spiritual, economic and political aspects that the African American men bring with them when they enter the classroom. Like other men, they go no where that these do not accompany them. This level of inclusiveness allows the men to periodically permit others to peer into the world they represent. They are already adept at tuning into the "other world," because marginalization has forced them to live a bifurcated existence.

#### CREATING THE MODEL: INCLUSIVE LEARNING PARADIGM THAT TRANSFORMS AN URBAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM CULTURE

There is no magic and there is nothing "new under the sun." Dewey (1938), DuBois (1973), Freire (1970 and 1973), Shor and Freire (1987), Woodson (1988) and Zacharakis-Jutz (1988) describe what is necessary to create a learning environment that is inclusive. It is participatory and empowering. The African American men with whom I worked on this project echoed similar sentiments. There is a blending of informal and formal aspects of learning. There are "teacher" and "learner" centered foci that flow from the discourse and provide the center of the paradigm. There is a "we-ness" feel to this that comes right out of the African experience. Individuals are encouraged to engage in critical thinking for the purpose of collective sharing, and problem solving. However, the process is not an intellectual or mind exercise designed for the purpose of getting a grade, or mastering the material, but one that results in the possibility of practical application in the place where the "teachers/learners" live--in the community, in the workplace, in their sense of themselves. Perhaps what is most important is the reduction of the feelings of alienation and aloneness. A sense of being empowered begins to emerge and the men's perception of themselves takes a different form, and their ways of seeing, being and acting in the classroom and the community reflects this change.

Adult education is an excellent way to use the academy to help African American men to "reclaim the discourse from the margin." The classroom can be structured so that there is a blending of both the way of the people and the way of the dominate society. It also lends itself to creating a discourse that is grounded in allowing each to be fully human while discovering the other's way of being, seeking ways to integrate the useful parts of each system into their own.

When we tested the model in the classroom we examined a point that Fanon (1967) raises about the importance of the oral tradition. This helped us to enter into discourse about the many ways of looking at an experience. Fanon addresses the role of language in the lives of "colonized peoples," i.e., people who are robbed of their worth, individuality; made to believe that they are a parasite on the world; and to rectify this they must bring themselves as quickly as possible into step with the white world (p. 98). Fanon believes that a man who has the mastery of language has remarkable power. This power enables him to rise above what he calls the "jungle status" to the extent he is willing to adopt the "mother country's" cultural standards (p. 18). Fanon also reminded us that the paradigm itself had to be examined during the discourse lest we forget our own efforts to seek inclusion at sometimes fairly high prices.

#### CONCLUSION

Five African American men participated in the original study for eighteen months. We used a group process format with phenomenology, linguistics and hermeneutics as research techniques, because they lent themselves to the exploratory nature we felt was needed for the project. The men's collaboration on the development of the learning paradigm helped to make this a "learner friendly" model. They not only shared their own experiences with the model, but observed in classes where it was being used, and offered critical feedback on how to refine it. They experienced a direct relationship between their perceptions of alienation in the college culture, and the development of inner and outer voices. The more included they felt, the less alienated they felt. This process ultimately resulted in their willingness to take greater risks, and to share knowledge that they identified as being owned by themselves. This model has been replicated with over five hundred learners in classes with racial and gender integration. The findings have remained consistent. When the learners felt included they not only spoke, but were eager to engage in work that physically and psychologically transformed the classroom into one that welcomes all who enter, i.e., minority men, men who represent the dominant culture, and women. The classroom also became a place where critical thinking, problem solving and collective action beyond the classroom was an integral part of the course outcomes.

Many African American men enrolled in urban community colleges are adults who have been "marginalized" by the society. Their marginalization is compounded by faculty who have not been "trained" to handle the challenge the men present. Although this research was conducted at an urban community college, it has implications for university faculty/learners. This research can be used for faculty development and for the retention of learners.

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## POPULAR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AS EDUCATIVE FORCES: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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### ABSTRACT

This paper offers a formative analytical framework designed to help the field of adult education understand better the inherently educative character of social movements.

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The educational dimension of popular social movements has attracted considerable attention in recent years (eg Finger, 1989, Kastner, 1993; La Belle, 1987; Paulston & Lejeune, 1980; Reed, 1981; Schied, 1993, Welton, 1993). Yet the field still lacks a robust theoretical framework that enables an exploration of the full richness of this dimension. In part this is because such activity is often "regarded as neither 'educational' nor 'political'" (CCCS, 1981, p. 33); in part it is because of a related reluctance on the part of many adult educators to embrace as 'educational' the informal learning that takes place in everyday life, whether 'systematically organised' or not.

The purpose of this paper is to offer a formative analytical framework that recognises popular social movements as *inherently* educative forces in themselves. With an eye to contemporary debates in social theory about 'old' and 'new' social movements, the paper begins by considering the concepts of 'education' and 'popular social movements.' Based on an understanding of these concepts, it then suggests a framework for analysis. This involves the identification and brief discussion of three key elements: vision, critical pedagogy, and pedagogy of mobilization. The paper concludes with some brief observations on the significance of this framework for the field of adult education.

### THE CONCEPT OF 'EDUCATION'

'Education' is a tricky concept. Although adult educators usually try to define it in ways that extend beyond the limits of schooling, they are nevertheless inclined to restrict its use to activities that are somehow recognizably 'educational' in form as well as intent (eg. Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982). In other words, 'schooling' remains, even if at times quite subtly, as the implied norm or main point of reference. Yet one of the major strands of thinking with which adult education has long been associated, the radical democratic tradition, conceptualizes education as something that is 'ordinary' (Williams, [1958] 1989). That is, a "process of human formation in society" (Joan Simon, 1977). This notion is derived via Marx from the eighteenth century French materialist writer, Claude Helvétius (see Law, 1992).

This understanding works in two ways. First, it recognizes that the world in which people live and all the activities that take place within it are inherently educative; thus the terrain of education encompasses all sites of "formative influences" (Brian Simon, 1984, p. 37): the family, the school, the church, the club, the workplace, the union, and so forth. Second, it recognizes that within the context of everyday life there are specific activities through which a society and groups within it intentionally try to influence the way others learn to interpret the world and to develop the skills to live within it or to change it.



## THE CONCEPT OF 'POPULAR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS'

The concept 'social movement' is equally difficult. Historically one important use of the term 'social movement' has been to refer, sometimes quite loosely, to the coming together of relatively large numbers of people around a commonly held set or values or notion of rights (human and/or social) in order to bring about social change. Thus there is a generally agreed sense in the term has been applied to, for example, the civil rights, labor, peace, temperance, or women's movements. The concept becomes much fuzzier, however, when its boundaries are extended or narrowed. This leads to a degree of resistance when it is suggested that something as vague, for example, as 'adult education' or as specific, for example, as a relatively localized environmental campaign constitutes a social movement.

The problem of definition has been further complication by the fashion in contemporary intellectual circles and social theory to distinguish between 'old' and 'new' social movements (eg Arato & Cohen, 1985; Boggs, 1986; Offe, 1985): a fashion that has now spilled over into adult education (eg. Finger, 1989, Kastner, 1993, Welton, 1993). Of these, Welton in particular offers a useful map of the territory. The full argument, which is richly embellished with postmodern analysis, is, of course, extraordinarily complex. One of its central themes is the rejection of universal values and overarching theories of human enlightenment and social change. In postmodern times, it is argued, the radical agenda has been fractured. This is attributed to a combination of reasons: the demise of Western welfare-capitalism, the collapse of Soviet socialism, the ascent of 'New Right' ideology and practices, and the intensification of globalization in all spheres, but, perhaps, most importantly, communications.

Within this context, 'new' social movements are regarded as having emerged as somewhat unconnected forces that focus on particular issues and/or the interests of identity groups: ethnicity, gender, sexuality, the environment, peace and so forth. Implicit in all of this is a rejection of the centrality of class. Instead new social movements are held to have their origins on the periphery of politics, to tend to have vague political strategies, and usually to have little attachment to established political parties.

## SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AS EDUCATIVE FORCES

Whether classified as 'old' or 'new' social movements are undisputably sites of formative influences. Within them people not only deepen their understanding of the central concerns of the movement, they also learn to acquire new skills, especially those related to movement building: a point we return to later. Social movements are also educative forces in the second sense identified above. That is, they engage in purposive activities that try to influence the way other people learn to interpret the world and to develop the skills to amend its meanings and realities.

Social movement education often takes forms that are recognizably 'educational': seminars, workshops, teach-ins, lecture tours, the printing and distribution of leaflets and so forth. But there is an equally important sense in which the full life of a social movement--poetry, music, petitions, pickets, and so forth--brings culture and politics together in an inherently educative way.

However while there may be many similarities between 'old' and 'new' movements as educative forces, Welton (1993) suggests that there are important differences related to their educational activities and the process of learning. These include the focus or content of participants' learning as well as the ways in which that learning takes place. But much more important, he argues, is the unlearning "of an older form of identity...an anthropocentric conception of humankind's relationship to nature and each other" (p. 157).

The analysis offered by Welton and others implies that the educative life of 'new' movements is much less certain than that of the 'old.' It suggests that without the comforting support of overarching theories of human enlightenment and social change, 'new' movements tend to keep the focus on single causes or the interests of identity groups. In other words, they educate around the particular and are less inclined to try to employ some overarching theoretical framework (such as those suggested by socialism and/or radical social democracy) in order to make connections between the particular and the general.

While this is a persuasive argument, there are grounds to challenge or modify it. For example in our country, New Zealand, we have seen the emergence of a powerful cultural and political renaissance by Maori, the indigenous people. At first glance this would appear to be a 'new' social movement. But a very comprehensive, historically grounded analysis of this movement by Walker (1990) indicates that a great deal of the 'old' remains active and pressing in the 'new.'

### **A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS**

It is against the backdrop of the preceeding observations that we offer a provisional framework for analyzing social movements as educative forces. This framework was derived from a literature base and developed in the context of a major empirical study (Dykstra, 1990). It suggests that the inherently educational life of a social movement consists of three, systematically interrelated elements: vision, critical pedagogy, and pedagogy of mobilisation. By 'systematically interrelated' we mean (after Fay, 1987) that each element and sub-element may often be employed in another.

#### Vision

The vision that educators have provides an essential dimension of education - the language of meaning. Transformative education requires the "articulation and remembrance of a vision" and the values that sustain it (Evans, 1987, p. 279). And it is this vision that enables participants in a social movement, as educators, to construct an alternative map of reality and a coherent, even if implied, systematic pedagogy that relates everyday activities to the values and aspirations they have for the wider community.

#### Critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy refers to an educational practice that critically informs, challenges and engages people in the creation and recreation of knowledge. We suggest that there are three dimensions to this: social consciousness, imagination, and dialogue. Social consciousness contains two further elements: critical thinking and experiential learning.

#### *Social consciousness:*

This is central to the dynamics of transformation, both for initiating change and for sustaining a movement. It is characterised by "questioning the every-dayness" of our lives (Greene, 1978), stripping the realm of the routine from its habitual foundations (Shor, 1980), and unmasking the relations of power/control that manufactures the consent that people unconsciously give to those in authority.

"Critical thinking" is a key strategy in this process. That is that process of learning, which can take many forms, that involves people in gaining an understanding of the political,

economic and social forces that influence daily life. Learning how to critique, to identify opportunities, and to act is at the core of transformative education.

Closely linked to this is "experiential learning." This refers to educational activity that moves beyond the provision of information and seeks to engage people in action. It also refers to the action itself (eg a petition or picket) and to the participation of people in that action. This process engages people at a level that challenges not only what they believe, but also what they are prepared to do (Isasi-Diaz, 1983).

### *Imagination*

This facet of a pedagogical strategy links back to vision and opens up space for transcendent thinking. The capacity to imagine allows people to create alternatives and frees them to transcend the boundaries they have established for themselves. Thus an important educational function of social movements is to create among people the ability to "possibilize," to have hope rather than despair (Purpel, 1989).

### *Dialogue*

In the context of transformative education, dialogue is understood best not as an educational technique, but rather as an indicator of a whole way of working within a social movement. It refers to a critically communicative process that is rooted in a horizontal relationship between people. As such it constitutes a form of resistance to the dominant understanding of social relations.

### Pedagogy of mobilization

Social movements bring culture and politics together through a pedagogy of mobilization: the practical process that involves people in building and sustaining the movement. This inherently educative, 'bottom-up' process appears to have four, often implicit dimensions: organizing and building, continuing participation, political action, and coalition and network building. Continuing participation has two elements: leadership development and the development of analytical and strategic thinking.

### *Organising and building:*

Social movements are more than organizations with structures, however loose, and a membership, however loosely defined. They are the creation of an alternative culture characterised by the informed perceptions and expectations of members, the values they hold, and the ways they go about doing things. This implies a complex learning process through which people come to recognize the common threads that run through their perceptions, expectations and values and come to reach some initial agreement on a course of action.

### *Continuing participation:*

People's continuing commitment to a social movement depends on how they actually experience authentic involvement. Thus participation--sharing ideas, decisions, work and meshing these into a collective effort--is a continuing educative process that "contributes to the development of individuals through a variety of experiences" (Staples, 1984, p. 131).

"Leadership development" is one of those experiences. Within most social movements there are a variety of opportunities for learning activists' skills. These include, but are not

limited to, recruitment, conducting effective meetings, engaging in tactical action, negotiating, working with the media, and fundraising.

"The development of analytic and strategic thinking" is another inherently educative experience. Within movements people acquire the capacity to engage in systematic, logical, analytical thinking that enables them to consider options and actions that will produce desired reactions and results. Strategic thinking is a process of knowledge that makes it possible to achieve a dialectic comprehension of a reality on the move. It is developed through "investigating reality, communicating and socializing information, analyzing and interpreting it, and playing a role in it" (Ministry of Education, Nicaragua, 1986, p. 17).

#### *Political action:*

Identifying the avenues of action that penetrate the political sphere and engaging in such action changes the contours of theoretical work. As an educative process it encourages "a greater willingness to use conflict and challenge authority" (Bailey, 1974, p. 143). And it is through this learning process that participants in social movements gain a practical understanding of the conditions that are necessary if they are to realize their movement's aspirations.

#### *Coalition and network building*

Undertaking such activity in order to extend the popular base of a social movement and to strengthen its impact is a vital strategy in the transformative process. Each stage of extension, starting with a particular struggle or group and making links across struggles with others, requires participants to engage in a continuing, dialogical process with each other in order to overcome divisiveness and to reach theoretical and practical compromises. Implicit within this process is a complexity of learning experiences; these include the further development of participants' capacity to reflect upon their values and aspirations as well as the acquisition of communicative skills.

### CONCLUSION AND SIGNIFICANCE

Analytical frameworks such as that presented here must always be employed with caution. First, because social movements are extraordinarily complex and thus it is somewhat artificial to try and tease out the discrete elements of an inextricably, interwoven educative process. Second, because particular social movements are shaped by specific national or regional cultures and politics and thus must be analysed in their specific historical, cultural, and political-economic context. Nevertheless, the significance of the framework presented in this paper is that it has the potential to help extend the field's self-understanding in that it provides a reasonably robust, even if still formative basis for evaluating the educative dimension of popular social movements.

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**Alone But Together: Adult Distance Study Through Computer Conferencing**  
**Author: Daniel V. Eastmond**

**Abstract:** Computer conferencing allows students to interact with each other and the instructor in structured communications from geographically dispersed locations, participating in the conference by personal computer and modem connection at any time of the day. This qualitative study investigated the following: (a) distance student life situations and reasons for seeking a degree as adults; (b) student perceptions of the computer conference and its role in learning; (c) the learning approaches students employ in this instructional environment; and (d) the nature of group discussions by diverse participants and the formation of on-line relationships.

### **Introduction**

Computer conferencing, a popular distance medium to have arisen in recent years, is a type of networked mainframe software that facilitates structured asynchronous communications, accessed by terminal or personal computer with a modem. The convergence of home computer proliferation, mainframe computer networks, and telephone access systems make computer-mediated communication readily and inexpensively available from all parts of the developed world. Harasim (1991) outlines how computer conferencing emerged for instructional use by higher education since the mid 1980s, and a recent monograph lists 200 institutions involved in using computer conferencing for education (Wells, 1992). Academic writing surrounding the use of computer conferencing proliferated along parallel lines. Journal articles appear from 1984, and three edited texts about the use of computer conferencing for education extend from 1989.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Scholars have hailed computer conferencing as a potent instructional medium, with advantages over both regular classroom instruction and other distance forms. Along with other electronic communications technologies, it affords heightened interactivity, a crucial instructional characteristic (Barker, Frisbie, & Patrick, 1989). Harasim (1989) lists several other advantages -- computer conferencing provides an "augmented environment for collaborative learning and teaching" (p. 60) because it is uniquely suited for group activities -- seminars, working groups, learning partnerships, and debates. Active learning is another key advantage -- by its very nature the on-line communications milieu promotes learner contributions. Another instructional factor is interactive learning -- providing more information exchange than a regular classroom in complex and non-linear patterns. Also, computer conferencing brings a more equitable distribution of communication, she observes, since everyone has equal opportunity to express themselves, and no one can easily dominate the conversation.

However, scholars also mention drawbacks to computer conferencing. Some difficulties Harasim (1987) reported students having were informational overload, asynchronicity, inconvenience of increased access, following multiple, concurrent discussions, and the loss of visual cues. To these Davie (1989) adds difficulties in using hardware and software, navigating one's way through the conversational environment with only a small screen with which to view it, time-delayed exchanges leading to disjointed transactions and poorly referenced communiqués, and participation based upon concern about one's written communication and typing abilities.

Despite the disadvantages just mentioned, the tone of the computer conferencing literature seems optimistic -- that improved instructor facilitation, technical support, student training, and instructional design will overcome the limitations of computer conferencing-based instructional systems. These views of computer conferencing -- its characteristics, advantages, and limitations -- are expressed by innovative educators, usually from reflection upon their own experience implementing and teaching through this medium, and are not based upon research. They often

represent the efforts of instructors seeking to develop successful learning experiences through experimenting with and thinking about computer conferencing courses, and are rarely informed by the expressed perceptions of actual distance students. Morgan (1984) writes also that "studies adopting qualitative methodologies are under-represented in distance education" (p. 255) because time and space separation involved in studying distance students inclines researchers to favor quantitative measures, such as through questionnaire mailing.

Some researchers have delved into the student's experience with distance computer conferencing study. Harasim's (1987) research of two graduate courses taught through computer conferencing is probably the most telling about how students perceive this medium of any study done to-date. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, she found that students spent longer on-line than they were required by the course, and they felt that this medium was effective. Students listed the advantages of computer conferencing as: increased interaction, access to a group, the democratic environment it fostered, the convenience of access, their control over the instructional process, the motivation they had to participate, and the textual nature of the computer conferencing medium.

### **Methodology**

This research, spanning a year and a half period, used qualitative methods to explore learners' perspectives of computer conferencing. These adult students, enrolled at a northeastern United States college, were taking distance courses via computer conferencing, to meet requirements for their bachelors degrees. This investigation addressed the adult student perspective about various topics surrounding their taking distance courses through computer conferencing:

- their ambitions for seeking a college degree in adulthood and how that pursuit fit into their personal and professional lifestyle.
- their views about computer conferencing -- the nature of the on-line environment with its advantages and limitations for learning.
- their ways of approaching learning through this medium, including tactics, strategies, lifestyle adjustments, and the gaining of technology competencies to learn in a new instructional environment.
- their views about the relationships they formed on-line, as well as the dynamics and polarities that emerged in computer conference conversations.

The study followed closely the constant comparative model for qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). I studied computer conferencing activities during two semesters on several courses. Also interviewed were two students who had taken other courses by computer conferencing earlier. The 20 students and four faculty and staff members provided 38 interview and observation sessions in the study -- generating, along with field memos and other documents, over 1000 pages of fieldnotes for analysis.

### **Who Are These Distance Students?**

The 20 students who participated in this study brought personal dreams, goals, values, supports, and beliefs to the distance learning setting. Such things as self-confidence to succeed, enjoyment of the learning process, ability to sustain a demanding lifestyle over a several year period, being able to establish long-term goals, and the continuous social support of family or friends enable them, as adults, to obtain a college degree, especially at a distance.

These learners were grouped into five categories, based on their orientation to learning: "necessity learners" (15%), "recareerers or ladder climbers" (20%), "rainy day planners" (45%), and "star seekers" (15%). These categories run a continuum of those who must earn their degree to get or keep a job, to those who have little vocational need for a college education. Some shared characteristics of these students were: (a) they were the first college-degree-seeking generation in

their families; (b) education assumed a secondary, though important activity to their primary work role as adults; and (c) they were similar to other students at the college on various demographic variables: students ranged in age from 23 to 53 years with an average age of 38, and all were employed, although two of them just had part-time jobs.

Exactly half of the students studied solely at a distance; the other students engaged in a variety of instructional formats: classroom, tutorials, distance education, and tutored groups. Unlike stereotypes of the isolated, lonely distance student, these adults were generally involved in supportive social networks, both at home and in the workplace. Their educational pursuit represents but one aspect of the strong family valuing and sustaining of education, as these students also supported children and spouses in their concurrent academic pursuits.

### **Perspectives of Computer Conferencing**

Most students accessed the computer conference from their homes. At both home and work, students interacted with others, discussing the computer conference or content ideas. Many had secluded, dedicated facilities for studying, but some students' workspaces were cramped and noisy.

Many findings dealt with student perceptions of computer conferencing as a learning environment. Novel at first, the atmosphere soon gave way to pressures of meeting course requirements. To a small group, the on-line environment was addictive; they compulsively checked messages, and it interfered with their home lives. Others found daily access recreational, an escape from the tedium of work and study. They saw the text-only aspect of computer communications as favoring good writers, encouraging more democratic participation, and one which more accurately or differently expresses character traits. Some students expressed difficulty with sustaining discussion on a topic over several weeks, but most thought the asynchronicity encouraged people to initially express their points of view and "speak up" in larger groups.

This study found that interactivity, a central feature of computer conferencing, depends largely upon on-line frequency, students staying on top of the discussions, and the manner in which they express themselves and invite responses. For infrequent "attendees," whose notes don't invite response, computer conferencing can become a passive, one-way medium. Competition emerged as the atmosphere in the Constitution course, whereas the often cited attribute of collaboration, was most apparent in the writing and telecommunication courses. Instructor style most influenced the collaborative or competitive tone of the conference.

Students' conceptions of learning strongly influenced whether they viewed the computer conferencing activity as promoting learning, similar to findings of Säljö (1979) with conventional students and Morgan (1984) with other distance students. Viewing learning as the passive acquisition of facts and concepts, one group thought they learned little from the conference -- that it served as a forum for students to vent their opinions. Alternatively, another group, who viewed learning as active efforts to personally know and apply knowledge, found the on-line conversations useful for development of their own position, for fitting ideas into new situations, for discovering divergent interpretations, and for reinforcing content learned in texts or videos.

### **Learning Approaches**

Adult students develop learning approaches to effectively deal with learning in a new instructional environment, like computer conferencing. Many of these are adaptations of general strategies they have regularly learned to employ in other settings, based on their learning style and preferences. However, other learning strategies are idiosyncratic to individuals and reflect efforts to deal with unique characteristics of the on-line delivery medium, such as: asynchronicity, information overload, multiple conversations, text-only environment, and so forth.



Students developed unique learning approaches, too, because of this new computer conferencing learning context. They found they needed to learn to use the computer network technology to meet the on-line course requirements. They determined an optimal rate to frequent the conference, based on the demands of their lifestyle and the instructional necessities they felt. Besides individual strategies for dealing with multiple discussions, information overload, asynchronicity, and textual ambiguities, they determined how to process the on-line information and the way they would contribute to the on-line conversation.

This study found that adult students first try to adapt the variety of learning strategies they bring from effectively dealing with other situations, when confronted with a novel instructional setting, such as computer conferencing. Through trial and error, borrowing, and creative discovery, they produce learning approaches that best suit their needs and preferences in fulfilling instructional demands, similar to that described by Candy (1990). Prior technical experience with similar computer technology and/or having someone nearby to help meet the initial technical challenges, strongly affected the success students had in this study mode; all students who enjoyed this instructional format had these elements in their favor.

This study indicates that media represent a whole other context within which learners apply learning-to-learn skills (LTL) (Smith, 1990). Depending upon the students' familiarity with the characteristics of the instructional technology, these may play as big or greater role in determining LTL strategies than the content itself. Candy (1990) suggests that superior learners are fully aware and consciously choose their LTL strategies, while this research indicates that these processes are quite removed from most learners' consciousness. Since LTL strategies are a means of learning and are rarely an objective themselves, learners underplay the value of them and are unaware of how they learn, unless caused to reflect upon it, as occurred during this research process.

### **Relationships and Learning**

Computer conferencing, perhaps more than any other distance medium, encourages interactions among students rather than just with the instructor. Two aspects of that characteristic became important in this study: (a) the tension created when diverse students meet and interact on-line, and (b) the evolving of relationships developed and sustained in the computer conferencing environment.

Perhaps greater diversity of opinion emerges in an on-line discussion than in a typical classroom because students come from different locations and represent conservatism and liberalism associated with regions of the country or urban, suburban, or rural environments. Sharing opinions amongst themselves, was a means of moving students from polar positions to ones more accommodating of different perspectives. These students appreciated not being able to prejudge or become constantly reminded of other class members' ethnicity, age, visible disability, and so forth. Relationships and honest communications occurred, they felt, that may not have happened in a classroom setting. The computer conference brought together an occupational mix of individuals holding a wide range of social roles and status who, in all likelihood, would not have met in other instructional settings because of geographical or time separation.

The study examined personal relationships students have on-line. Ted\* and Rose's experience provide an example. The social dynamics of the learning group in one conference which largely influenced Rose's accomplishment and enjoyment -- partnership among caring and skillful peers -- became one where Ted fell into simply enduring the course through token involvement. He had expressed coarse and unpopular opinions about multicultural and gender issues and was ostracized; also he was matched with another student who was much more capable.

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\* All names are fictitious to maintain the adult students' anonymity.

The relationship of Craig and Kerry provides another example from this study to show the formation, expression, and permanence of personal relationships on-line. These two students, members of the Constitution course, formed a mutually enjoyable on-line association and considered themselves friends. Although they planned to meet in-person afterwards, they never did, and their email communication gradually ceased six months after the course. The study showed that some students do provide personal, caring support for each other during the conference. However, such relationships, like most of their classroom counterparts, quickly dissolve after an on-line class ends.

### **Discussion of Practical Applications**

Besides extending the knowledge base about distance study through computer conferencing, the value of this research lies in providing implications with applications to practical settings, including:

- *Findings about distance students* -- Individualizing instructional approaches, such as those Hiemstra & Sisco (1990) advocate, need to include workplace tasks and career development, since most distance students are pursuing degrees for vocational reasons. These approaches should also address each student's social and family network for educational support to improve its affect on their degree progress.
- *Findings about computer conferencing* -- Since computer conferencing doesn't fit the learning styles of all students, alternative formats and multi-media approaches to distance study should be incorporated. Course designs should explicitly seek to maximize interactivity, collaboration, active participation, reflection, and self-direction through course structure and activities, while informing students of these intents and their importance to the learning process. Initial technology training and continuous technical support remain important.
- *Findings about learning approaches* -- Although necessary learning strategies for computer conferencing are seldom taught for distance on-line courses, these elements would enable successful learning experiences. Instructional materials could stress such elements as: (a) mastering the use of one's own personal computer and the conferencing software; (b) participating in the on-line discussion several times weekly; (c) making at least one contribution or more each time they participate; (d) seeking to reference other's comments and keep one's own notes within the context of the current topic; (e) placing notes in appropriate discussion items; (f) keeping most communications short, task or topic specific, and clear with an informal tone.
- *Findings for administrative policy formation* -- Institutions must accurately convey the extent of on-line involvement for course completion, the technical requirements of this media, and the amount of work expected for these distance courses. Instructors who will attend to the conference actively, frequently, and enthusiastically, and whose teaching style encourages group dialogue should be sought for early implementation of this instructional innovation. Access to this technology requires more than simply student purchase of a modem and computer. So, while facilitating access, institutions need to look at informational, instructional, and socialization issues in their policy efforts to attract under-represented groups to this form of distance study.

### **Conclusion: Alone But Together**

Computer conferencing brings together diverse students and encourages them to share their perspectives with one another, exposing their differences, while working towards commonality. Whether friendly or hostile exchanges, these encounters lead to important learning by all parties. On-line relations can be formed by some who might otherwise be set off by physical appearance,

coming to know others before prejudices color those bonds. However, despite the meaning and important purposes these relationships serve during the conference, they afterwards dissolve. Ultimately conferees are left alone, too distant or busy to meet face-to-face or sustain continued or enhanced friendships. But, during the course of the distance study by computer conferencing, these students have created bridges in a world as divided as ever by distance, time, culture, economic means, and the pace of living and working in the adult world.

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## **Making Literacy Functional in Rural West Africa: The Experience of Groupements villageois in Burkina Faso**

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and Mwenene Mukweso (Florida State University)

*Abstract: This paper examines the results of an innovative functional literacy program in rural Burkina Faso which gives accelerated training to village enterprise managers.*

West African countries have seen a succession of styles of adult literacy promotion over the last thirty years. These include the traditional literacy programs sponsored by UNESCO in the early years of independence, the functional literacy fashion inaugurated in Teheran in 1965 and applied selectively since, political mobilization campaigns in certain countries, World Bank-funded integrated development efforts in the 1970s, and – more recently – various blends of these approaches increasingly developed by NGOs as much as by Ministries of Education.

Burkina Faso, a landlocked Sahelian country and former French colony located between Ghana on the south and Mali on the north, has experienced most of these fashions over the years since its own independence. In the last decade, however, a new method of "intensive literacy" (*alphabétisation formation intensive* or "AFT") focussed on preparing staff and members of the country's village economic units (*groupements villageois* or, hereafter, "GVs") for management of new rural economic enterprises has appeared and made remarkable strides. Previously illiterate rural farm people – both men and women – are reported to have acquired basic literacy in six to twelve weeks' time and then to have succeeded in applying their knowledge to the development of these village enterprises.

This paper presents the results of a study of the literacy movement in the Burkina Faso GV's designed to determine what participants had effectively learned regarding accounting, how well they were succeeding in applying it, and what impact this training has had on the operation of local enterprises. Since such programs potentially offer a more cost-effective and "endogenous" way of meeting short-term rural human resource needs than formal primary schooling, careful attention was also paid to comparing the accomplishments of those who had previously received some level of primary education and of those who had not.

### **The Literacy Debate**

Functional literacy and alternatives to it have been the subject of an intense, if intermittent, debate that shows few signs of abating thirty years after UNESCO inaugurated this new rationale for literacy programs in its Teheran conference. In fact, the dispute has spread to industrialized nations as well, where recent concerns about "workplace literacy" and the competitive qualities of the labor force have given a new sense of urgency to the functional literacy movement and to the analyses of its critics. New players, notably NGOs and private businesses, have gotten into the act alongside longtime advocates like government Ministries and international agencies.



Very schematically, three ideological and technical positions could be identified in the welter of discussion in the current literature: traditional or cultural literacy (e.g. Okenimpe, 1992), functional and economically-relevant literacy (e.g. Gordan et al., 1991), and politically emancipatory or "conscientising" literacy (e.g., Freire, 1976). The functional approach has frequently been placed in sharp distinction, if not diametrical opposition, to strategies for literacy based on political mobilization, religious revival or cultural enrichment or revitalization. The functional approach is alternately praised as uniquely productive by proponents and condemned as crass or fundamentally coercive by opponents. Yet it can equally be argued that viable strategies contain elements of all three approaches and can only long survive on that basis -- no small feat to accomplish.

To a considerable extent, the debate among different schools of thought regarding literacy in Africa is a debate *about why programs have failed*, for the simple reason that the record of literacy campaigns and projects in the field reveals precious few large-scale or durable successes. Basically, nothing seems to have worked on a large-scale except a few political mobilization efforts -- whose results unfortunately tend to be evanescent, though no less significant -- and the year-by-year increases wrought by the spread of primary schooling, itself now in serious difficulties throughout West Africa.

Isolated experiences, however, have made some dimensions of the situation increasingly clear. Easton (1989, p. 440) sums up two lessons of experience:

- (1) The very weak results recorded in most rural literacy campaigns, whether traditional or "functional", in fact generally reflect an accurate assessment by the target population of the limited utility of literacy in such resource-poor (and hence "low-transaction") environments more than they do any generic incapacity on their part to master the new skills...
- (2) Strategies for better local accumulation and reinvestment of economic surpluses -- such as the institution of locally and democratically managed marketing and credit structures - - can, however, create radically new conditions for the acquisition and uses of literacy because they multiply the number and importance of transactions to be managed and create new structures of accountability.

### The Burkina Faso case

Though officially a Sahelian country, Burkina Faso spans climates that range from quasi-desert to wooded savannah. With 9,125,000 inhabitants and a territory covering just under 275,000 square kilometers, it is relatively sparsely populated; yet density is quite variable, and the limited areas of highly arable land are becoming increasingly crowded. Agriculture remains the principal economic activity of the Burkinabè (as the inhabitants of the country are called) and contributes 85% of the meager per capita income of \$317 per annum.

The Government of Burkina Faso initiated traditional literacy programs soon after its independence, but results were no more encouraging here than throughout the rest of West Africa. Functional approaches of two distinct sorts were tried after 1965. The first, based on

the UNESCO methodology of "learn to produce better," had little success. A second, a more limited initiative entitled "Intensive Literacy" aimed at training village accountants and managers in the growing number of local GVs to handle local enterprises through 4 full-time sessions of 12 days duration each, had some palpable impact. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were principally responsible for the effort.

These organizations gradually evolved a more refined version of the "intensive literacy" methodology, designed both to give literate competence in the major African language (Moré) to the village personnel of the GVs and to provide a basis for spreading that competence to larger and larger proportions of the local population, both male and female. The process included three distinct stages:

- (1) An initial series of four intensive sessions, each one 12 days long (two weeks of six days with a day's rest in the middle). These four sessions were held during the dry season, spaced a week apart and devoted to the acquisition of basic literacy in African language, plus numeracy and initial practice with notions of accounting.
- (2) Two "supplemental" sessions (also twelve days each) after the rainy season devoted to consolidation of the literacy lessons and fuller practice with accounting applications.
- (3) Two "specialization" sessions (twelve days each) a month or two later focussed strictly on accounting applications which are usually conducted by staff of the local cooperative or rural development agency rather than literacy personnel.

### Methodology

Our study of the effects of this accelerated literacy training format focussed on the competencies actually acquired by village accountants and the degree to which the sequence of courses enabled previously illiterate villagers to assume these responsibilities with a degree of success at least comparable to that attained by those who had the advantage of primary education. The study was carried out in a stratified sample of villages ( $n=120$ ), drawn from those having active GVs in seven of the 30 geographical departments that comprise Burkina Faso. A few of these GVs were women's organizations and others included some women members.

The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to "triangulate" on the reality concerning the competency and functions of these village managers and accountants. The quantitative portion entailed seeking to determine the correlation between the level of literate training of this village personnel and three aspects of its performance that are potentially attributable to this training: (1) the subject's knowledge of accounting concepts and techniques, determined by a test of accounting knowledge based on the concepts presented in their training (scored on a base of 20); (2) the subject's practical competence in accounting, determined by a standardized simulation exercise with a journal and various accounting forms (scored on a base of 30); and (3) the efficiency of the daily operations of the GV itself, determined by an index derived from 12 observable indicators of the unit's performance (scored on a base of 12). Longitudinal data were not available, so analysis is based on cross-sectional information regarding the competencies of cohorts with different amounts of training. In

addition, since correlation is obviously not the same thing as causation, information was also gathered on a series of "intervening" variables that might explain parts of any observed relationship.

On the qualitative side, intensive and more ethnographic case studies were conducted in a sample of 10 villages among the 120 initially selected. Inquiry here focussed on interviews with the GV staff, village administrators and other residents.

Analysis of this data proceeded in two phases. First the quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and comparatively to examine the relationship between intensive literacy training and our measures of performance. Since the results were to be used principally by Burkinabè researchers who are not accustomed to multivariate analysis techniques like regression, LISREL and ANOVA, we adopted instead the technique of multiple cross-tabulations, arguably an equally valid method for probing issues of causality and certainly one more intuitively meaningful to practitioners. Next these results were compared to the yield of our qualitative inquiries in order to draw overall conclusions.

### The Results

Quantitative results are summarized in Table 1 hereafter. Overall, 130 village accountants were tested, 36 of them women and 84 men. Their ages ranged from 18 to 70, but averaged 36 with a standard deviation of 10. Fifty of them had attended at least some primary school; the other eighty had no scholastic training and had been essentially illiterate.

The first result of note (cells C1-C12) is that the levels of all three performance indicators increase significantly from one group to the next (as reflected in the F statistics in the first footnote), though the increase is understandably least pronounced on the measure of GV performance. In point of fact, the "gain score" in each case is best represented by the difference between levels II and IV, rather than I and IV, for the following reason: The group with no training apparently includes a disproportionate number of those villagers who had substantial primary schooling and therefore did not feel that they needed to take part in the intensive literacy courses. It therefore does not very accurately simulate a baseline level for comparison purposes. The overall gain scores are, however, positive and statistically significant in each case.

The next question is the degree to which this apparent effect of AFI is explained by differential representation of "schooled" villagers at the different training levels, and the degree to which those with schooling seem to benefit more from the training or attain higher levels of competence than those without. A cross-tabulation by schooling status is offered for all three performance indicators in Table 1 (Columns A and B) and training group averages are weighted to compensate for differential representation. Schooled villagers do attain higher levels of competence than non-schooled, but one also notes (a) that both groups advance; (b) that the "unschooled" who complete the training (and even those who finish only two of the three phases) score distinctly better than the "schooled" who did not take the courses; and (c) that the "unschooled" come the closest to catching up with their "schooled" counterparts in the realm of practical competence.

**TABLE 1: AVERAGE SCORES OF RESPONDENTS ON KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE AND GV OPERATIONS INDICATORS BROKEN OUT BY THEIR SCHOOLING (N=130)**

| TRAINING PROGRAM |                           | TEST   | (A)       | (B)      | (C)           | (D)     | (E)                |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------|-----------|----------|---------------|---------|--------------------|
|                  |                           |        | SCHOOLING |          | AVERAGE SCORE |         | GAIN               |
|                  |                           |        | No School | School   | Average       | Wtd Ave | SCORE <sup>1</sup> |
| 1                | I. No Training            | Knowl  | .235      | 5.917    | 1.717         | 3.076   | 5.681*             |
| 2                |                           | Pract  | .263      | 10.542   | 4.696         | 5.403   | 10.279**           |
| 3                |                           | GVindx | 4.824     | 5.833    | 5.087         | 5.329   | 1.009              |
| 4                | II. Intensive Literacy A  | Knowl  | 2.125     | 3.667    | 2.786         | 2.896   | 1.542              |
| 5                |                           | Pract  | 4.125     | 9.000    | 6.214         | 6.563   | 4.875              |
| 6                |                           | GVindx | 4.875     | 4.667    | 4.786         | 4.771   | -.208              |
| 7                | III. Intensive Literacy B | Knowl  | 7.632     | 10.091   | 8.534         | 8.862   | 2.459              |
| 8                |                           | Pract  | 12.026    | 15.409   | 13.266        | 13.718  | 3.383              |
| 9                |                           | GVindx | 6.368     | 6.727    | 6.500         | 6.548   | .359               |
| 10               | IV. Account- ing Training | Knowl  | 10.263    | 13.714   | 12.075        | 11.989  | 3.451*             |
| 11               |                           | Pract  | 20.553    | 22.452   | 21.550        | 21.503  | 1.899              |
| 12               |                           | GVindx | 6.739     | 9.143    | 8.000         | 7.941   | 2.404**            |
| 13               | Average <sup>2</sup>      | Knowl  | 4.562     | 9.840    | 6.592         | 7.201   | 5.278**            |
| 14               |                           | Pract  | 9.269     | 16.430   | 12.023        | 12.850  | 7.161**            |
| 15               |                           | GVindx | 5.650     | 7.280    | 6.277         | 6.465   | 1.630**            |
| 16               | Weighted Average          | Knowl  | 5.064     | 8.347    | 6.706         | 6.327   | 3.283**            |
| 17               |                           | Pract  | 9.242     | 14.351   | 11.796        | 11.207  | 5.109              |
| 18               |                           | GVindx | 5.702     | 6.593    | 6.141         | 6.044   | .891               |
| 19               | Gain Score <sup>3</sup>   | Knowl  | 8.140**   | 10.050** | 9.290**       | 9.090** | -1.91              |
| 20               |                           | Pract  | 16.428**  | 13.452** | 15.336**      | 14.940* | 2.976              |
| 21               |                           | GVindx | 1.864     | 4.476**  | 3.214**       | 3.170** | -2.612             |

<sup>1</sup> Statistical significance of differences is indicated as follows: \*\*\* < .001; \*\* < .01; \* < .05.

<sup>2</sup> F ratio for differences among training groups are: Knowledge = 35; practice = 27.49 and GV index = 10.16. In all three cases,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>3</sup> Gain scores (rows 19-21) are calculated from training levels II (intensive) and IV (accounting) for reasons detailed in the text.



In addition, though this is not portrayed in Table 1, we controlled the results for several other factors that proved to be significantly related to performance levels and/or training history: gender, age, literacy level of the village, and relative wealth of the GV. There were distinct differences between the performance results of men and women, though, once again, both groups benefitted by the training, and the women's relatively weaker attainment seem to be explained in part by their inability to attend all three phases of the course. Young participants did generally better than old ones, as did those from more literate villages and employed by more relatively prosperous GVs. Size of village per se made no discernible difference; and there was even some evidence that the literacy program had provided small villages a means to "catch up" with the larger ones which are more likely to have primary schools.

Data on the qualitative side made it clear that most participants attributed their capacity to handle accounting responsibilities to the literacy training, but that the program had obtained the best results in villages where positions were not automatically assigned to members of the traditional hierarchy. Women's heavy load of daily occupations came out more clearly as the prime factor explaining their lower level of participation and attainment.

#### Interpretation and Conclusions

The principal conclusion of the study is that, given a context where new competencies can be directly applied to the democratic management of substantial collective resources, it is entirely possible in relatively short order not only for previously illiterate rural inhabitants to become functionally literate, but equally for them to acquire the competency necessary to exercise important accounting and management functions. Those with some previous schooling do generally better in this regard, but even those without attain comparable levels, particularly in respect to actual technical practice. Women show much the same potential competence but, in the rural West African setting, are hindered by a heavy load of daily domestic chores.

In short, functional literacy seems to provide a very viable strategy in this environment, provided that the word "functional" is correctly understood: it refers not so much to the content of the courses -- that follows logically but can appropriately include cultural and political subjects as well -- but rather to the actual "functions" that participants can take over upon completion of their study and the degree of autonomy, responsibility and resource access associated with this work.

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**Adult Education and the Cross-Cultural Transfer of Innovation:  
A Curricular Analysis of the Rural Organization Development Project in Niger**

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*Abstract: Careful examination of the "curricular viability" of a new USAID-supported cooperative development strategy in the Republic of Niger provides a key complement to standard forms of development intervention assessment.*

The cross-cultural transfer of innovation has been a major theoretical concern in the field of communications and a major practical one in the domain of Third World Development for a number of years (e.g. Rogers, 1983). It also has obvious and important linkages to the concerns of adult education, since the acceptance of innovation is a critical instance of behavior change on the part of the adopters and requires supportive new learning. Yet the exact role of adult learning theory in analyzing the successes and failures of complex and institutionalized forms of cross-cultural innovation -- what innovationists refer to as the "software" of development or its "socio-technology" -- has not yet been fully explored, perhaps because that theory has not been very cross-cultural in nature and has addressed the individual more than the socio-institutional level of experience (Rubenson, 1989).

Recent advances in conceptualizing learning environments and in analyzing the "curricular" aspect of workplaces, however, offer a much better means of probing the ways in which innovations are institutionalized in the recipient culture and do, or do not, become part of the personal repertoire of the people concerned (e.g., Leyman & Kornbluh, 1989). We wish in this paper to apply such an adult education analytical framework to a critical assessment of a particular cross-cultural innovation: the introduction of a new U.S.-sponsored rural cooperative development policy in the Republic of Niger, West Africa.

The rural Sahel in general, and the Republic of Niger in particular, have been trapped for years between very low levels of agricultural productivity and despairing mass poverty. In Niger, where 80% of the growing population live in rural areas deriving their livelihood from a narrow strip of arable land along the country's southern border, GNP per capita amounts to no more than \$290, the literacy rate barely reaches 10% at present, and the net primary school enrollment rate stands at 28%. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated Niger's annual compound growth rate of per capita food production as *negative* 3.6% for the 1977-1986 period. Agriculture and rural development are thus a question of life and death in Niger.

Historically, rural development interventions in countries like Niger have been "done to the poor", though they have been accompanied by an increasing dosage of language about participation. Agricultural cooperatives are one longstanding formula in Africa for associating farmers in an effort to overcome perceived constraints on rural development and household well-being. They generally propose performing collectively one or more of a series of critical rural economic functions, including improved agricultural production, better organized marketing or distribution, securing of farm input credit, agricultural extension and training, and capitalization of agricultural surpluses.

Though potentially quite participatory, cooperative structures have more often been just the reverse. They were initially set up in Niger in 1960 under the country's first independent government and were modelled after European cooperatives (Moulton, 1977). Since then, there have been a series of different strategies – some more participatory in intent than others, but all conceived under government sponsorship and sooner or later infected with chronic mismanagement and over-centralization (Sidikou, 1990).

Recently, as the country is faced with the worst financial crisis in its 30 year history, new economic policies reflecting a free-market orientation have been recommended by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The corollary in the rural cooperative domain has been a new policy, developed under the auspices and with monies from USAID and launched by CLUSA, the Cooperative League of the United States of America. The novelty in CLUSA's development effort resides in its prescription that rural cooperatives henceforth function strictly as private profit-making enterprises.

The new policy, known as Rural Organizations Development (ROD), started as a pilot project in September, 1989. Under the new CLUSA policy, individual local cooperatives are expected to enter the market place and deal directly with private banks, commercial farm input suppliers, and commercial farm produce marketeers in all their transactions. It is reasoned that these organizations will thereby learn to maximize profits and their members well-being more effectively than was the case under the previous more socialized and government-sponsored forms of the cooperative movement.

This sort of "socio-technological" innovation is, obviously, a potent form of adult education as well. Its educative role goes far beyond the explicit training sessions or courses that may be organized in the course of project implementation. We suggest that a "curricular analysis" of ROD policy is one critical element in understanding the nature and feasibility of this particular instance of cross-cultural transfer of innovation. Our approach is an endorsement of the views of Leymann and Kornbluh (1989, p. xi), namely the

constructive heresy... that concepts of learning can be plausibly applied to workplaces, and .. that workplaces should be evaluated, at least in part, by the extent to which they enable workers to acquire and enhance valued skills and abilities.

### Methods

What should performing a "curricular analysis" of the ROD policy and strategy in Niger entail? We start with some traditional evaluation methodology and seek to augment and deepen it in order to reveal the unspoken assumptions on which that strategy may be based and the nature and viability of its learning content. Three steps are involved:

First, program evaluators have recently taken to pointing out that any intervention -- or innovation strategy, for that matter -- can be considered a "theory" about how the target social context operates and how it can be modified. That theory can be described using the CIPP language introduced to the evaluation field by Stufflebeam: in order to accomplish certain key results ("outputs") which are deemed necessary as a means of achieving more fundamentally desired "outcomes", a program prescribes that a given set of "inputs" (material, human and intellectual resources) will be obtained and introduced into the

environment through a more or less specific "process" detailed in its methodology. One simplified program evaluation procedure therefore consists in reconstituting this "program theory" (or the various versions of it that may exist), then comparing what has transpired in the field with these intentions, and finally seeking to understand the meaning that should be attached to shortfalls and discrepancies.

Critical policy analysis carries this approach further by pointing out that the (often) unspoken assumptions that underlie any intervention strategy are at least as important as its official methodology and need to be as carefully explicated. Those assumptions concern most particularly another element of the Stufflebeam model -- the "context" -- and one that is rarely examined in evaluative reconstitutions of program strategies. In other words, the analysis of contextual factors (like the priority needs of beneficiaries, their existing capacities and cultural proclivities) that is embedded in a project's choices of method and approach determine much about the direction it will take. Critical policy analysis -- the second step in our procedure -- thus involves articulating just these "problem frames" and presuppositions.

The third step is to examine the "curricular viability" of this more fully articulated strategy. By curricular viability, we mean the nature of the behavioral changes and new functions that the strategy entails, their relevance to the beneficiaries, and the degree to which adequate provision has been made for the necessary learning. More specifically, four levels of assessment are implied: first, an analysis of the nature of the new roles and behaviors entailed (their depth, breadth, and distribution across relevant population groups); second, an assessment of their "political legitimacy" and the degree of ownership created (how and by whom were they devised?); third, consideration of their "cultural validity" (how well do they tap and develop existing energies?); and, finally, evaluation of their "instructional feasibility" (can these things be learned in the manner prescribed?).

### The Model

**Outputs and Outcomes.** The official goal of ROD is to help resolve "a major problem of rural Niger identified as the small scale of economic activities by the rural population and the lack of diversity of revenue producing activities." The intermediate objectives are to assist in the creation of free-standing cooperatives that can operate as business ventures without government direction, identify and design economically feasible income-generating activities, negotiate the necessary bank credits, carry out the projects, realize a profit, and invest it in subsequent ventures.

**Processes and Inputs.** CLUSA's approach to revamping cooperatives or creating new ones consists in "generating member involvement and a sense of ownership" (CLUSA, n.d.) To do so, a local organization which considers "cooperative members true partners in the development process" is set up to implement a cooperative development project. The language of CLUSA policy in this regard is very reminiscent of the Total Quality Management movement recently touted in industrialized countries: project documents speak of "establishing a clear vision and organizational mission, creating a strong organizational culture with well articulated values, operating from a flat, flexible structure..."

The official methodology, applied across six of the seven geographic Departments of the Republic of Niger, involved several distinct steps:



- (1) The first step prescribed initial contact between ROD representatives and the General Assembly (GA) and Village Mutual Assemblies (VMA) of interested cooperatives. ROD staff were to present the underlying objectives and approaches of the project and answer any questions.
- (2) After the cooperative decision-making bodies are given a period to discuss their potential involvement, ROD staff return to learn their decision and, if it is favorable, sign an agreement between CLUSA and the village organization. At the same time, the village cooperative members designate a group of "Animators" (generally about two per village) who will assume technical and policy functions in the new entity.
- (3) Next ROD staff and village cooperative officials undertake a joint "feasibility study" of possible economic activities.
- (4) This leads to collaborative design of one or more projects for the cooperative, including the development or adoption of necessary procedures and accounting forms. In addition, ROD staff assist cooperative personnel in applying to national banks for non-concessional credit to launch the activity. CLUSA sets up a "collateral fund" with the banks to guarantee loans to ROD cooperatives.
- (5) Two to four weeks of training is then given to cooperative staff designated by the villagers in order to enable them to handle their new management responsibilities.
- (6) Implementation of the activity takes place over the ensuing year, interspersed with technical training arranged by ROD and village cooperative staff in response to particular skill needs that emerge from the implementation process.
- (7) At the end of the year (or designated project period) an evaluation is jointly conducted to assess the success of the undertaking and draw lessons to guide subsequent efforts.

Though many of the accounting forms and materials are in local language (principally Zarma/Songhai or Hausa), some familiarity with French is practically a requirement of cooperative staff, since the banks deal strictly in this language.

#### Assumptions

Three deeper assumptions seem to underlie this methodology:

- (1) The first is that there are a number of unexploited potentials for profitable economic activity in rural Niger and that conditions there conform more or less to the model of a Western free market system.
- (2) The second appears to be that the prime constraining influence on that potential is excess Government control, so that if these shackles are removed economic initiative will thrive. Operationally speaking, this meant that the ROD strategy involved in reality trying to undermine and replace the existing state-supported cooperative movement.

- (3) The third is that a significant and equitable sample of villagers are ready and able to participate in a self-governing business cooperative and will be able to generate the necessary procedures and forms given the latitude and motivation to do so.

### Implementation

From the outset, implementation of the ROD Project was somewhat disturbed by a fundamental difference of outlook between two groups of personnel: one the one hand, those who saw the project as fundamentally a business affair designed to create viable private enterprises in rural areas (principally CLUSA staff); and, on the other hand, those who viewed the business activities as essentially a pretext for training Nigerien villagers in management skills, literacy, and economic analysis (principally Nigerien staff).

After an initial spurt toward its quantitative goal of 300 new cooperatives in five years, the project had to slow down and cut back, because many of the village organizations that had chosen to participate in order to benefit from the bank credits and be sheltered from government control proved unable to generate viable economic activities or handle the management responsibilities. By a process of "triage", the more than 175 cooperatives enrolled by 1992 were cut back to 79 in 1993. Within the remaining units, economic activities have been small scale but relatively successful, with average profits of \$1000-\$2000 per year. Rates of reimbursement of bank credits have attained 95%, though it is hard to say what portion of this repayment was made from CLUSA collateral. More than a thousand village representatives have been trained in management and have assumed these functions.

There are nonetheless a number of significant blemishes in the record:

- (1) The vast majority of cooperatives have undertaken one single and identical economic activity: buying and selling food grains. Though this strategy has had the very positive effect of making the food supply to the village much more reliable than in the past, it involves no upgrading of local agricultural production capacity -- since the food stuffs are simply bought on distant markets, stored and resold -- and has not to date had any spin-off effects in related realms of rural development.
- (2) Most cooperatives depend heavily for all the technical steps in the process outlined above on ROD staff (the Regional Assistants in particular), because few villagers have the competence or experience to negotiate with banks or perform feasibility studies. The project remains somewhat hamstrung between those who would like to emphasize this learning to the detriment, if necessary, of the business objectives of the cooperative and those who are ready to short-change training in order to ensure profitability and continued operation.
- (3) The banks constitute a considerable obstacle, because they will not deal with cooperatives in the vernacular and impose strict regulations that limit their ability to use the proceeds of their projects as "seed capital" for new local investments.
- (4) For all these reasons, direct impact on the broader population within the villages -- and on women in particular -- has been limited, excepting the appreciable, and much appreciated, improvements in food supply.

## Curricular Viability

This brief recounting of the theory and results of the ROD project to date provides grist for at least an initial assessment of the "curricular viability" of the project.

**Curricular Content.** Overall, the ROD cooperative strategy has created rather little in the way of new functions and behaviors within village communities. Since the economic activities to date are primarily external and handled by a minority of village representatives (and often with some difficulty by those), the learning needs and opportunities created by the project are distinctly limited. It comes as no surprise, then, that the broader training courses initially envisaged have taken plan almost nowhere.

**Political legitimacy.** The project enjoys considerable political legitimacy and initial ownership by the target population, thanks to three factors: (1) the relatively participatory way in which it was proposed and designed; (2) the important food security benefits it has procured; and (3) the freedom it has given from continued government control. At the same time, however, it has generated little further "empowerment" in the way of new investment in local economic activity or related skill acquisition.

**Cultural validity.** The data suggest that the villagers have taken what they wanted from the offerings of the ROD Project, without necessarily adopting its underlying spirit. The biggest problem arises from the inaccuracy of the assumption that rural Niger operates in free market fashion and that there are a plethora of potentially profitable economic activities out there in which villagers can easily engage, with their present material and human resources. Moreover, lacking a greater density of new village functions, the project has generated little momentum to draw on and develop indigenous.

**Instructional feasibility.** It has proved possible to train village representatives in at least some of the immediate management tasks; but instruction of a larger proportion of the population through the cooperative experience itself has been minimal.

## Conclusions

What then appears to be the overall curricular viability of the project? Despite a declared emphasis on training, the project has not had a very broad impact on learning, because new roles are not strongly and widely enough built into the strategy. It does not presently constitute a very dense "learning environment," though it might become one. The real problem is (a) the unrealism of its underlying assumptions about markets; and (b) the continuing divorce between its business and training orientations.

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**Postmodern Doors Into A Modern Community College:  
Of Empires and Entryways,  
Of Doors Jammed Open and Door Jambs Broken**

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**Abstract:** The sureness of the modern educational project has been undermined by shifting epistemological and material conditions. The shift from modernity to postmodernity develops its own incongruencies and anomalies as well as highlighting those extant during modernity. The author argues that the modern community college in British Columbia can be read postmodernly as a metaphor for and an exemplar of the modern American recolonization of the Canadian mind. Amelioration can result through developing a postcolonial, localized discourse.

**Background:** By the end of World War Two Canada outwardly exhibited all the traits of the modern condition. The economy, merchant marine and military were among the world's largest and most modern. Political stability was taken for granted. Canada embodied modernity as nowhere else. Between 1870 and 1970 the nation grew faster, took in more space, and put out more material goods per person in a shorter period of time than anywhere else. However, the educational project remained anomalous within this apparently modern country. Post secondary education remained undeveloped, both in terms of delivery systems and in terms of nationally constructed content, especially outside "central" Canada and especially as compared to the nation to the south that had taken on modernity as its own.

In English-Canada the stories from the imperial centres, first Britain and then the U.S., were taken as its own. Writing of a distinctive Canadian curriculum was forced to the margins, a project for the disaffected, for nationalist malcontents. Canada remained *almost alone among the countries of the world in teaching other peoples' central knowledge as primary and our own as secondary* (Matthews, 1994:28).

Out on the West Coast of North America, in the Canadian province of British Columbia, post-secondary education, university and apprenticeship education excepted, remained neglected for much of the twentieth century. Victim perhaps of the colonized mind that saw "real" knowledge and culture as that gained within or emanating from the imperial states, state controlled post-secondary education lay in abeyance. In the 1970's, when the desire for post-secondary education was addressed in a comprehensive manner, the post-secondary system the provincial government developed differed considerably from such systems elsewhere in Canada.

**Purpose:** The purposes of this paper were to use postmodern theory to contextualize and historicize the community college in British Columbia, thereby allowing for a



resituated and reconceptualized educational practice.

**Methodology:** In what is undoubtedly a vulgarization of Derridean method, I construct a binary opposition between modernity and postmodernity on the one hand. On the other hand, I deconstruct text based in an acritical acceptance of the narrative strategies, rhetorical devices and instrumental rationality of modernism. Perhaps underhandedly, this openly ideological methodological strategy allows me to fashion a narrative that constructs difference to privilege rather than marginalize local knowledges and experiences and to marginalize rather than privilege instrumental and humanist framings of the educational project which form so central a part of the metanarrative of modernity.

**Significance:** Significance accrues to this project because redefining, recontextualizing and rehistoricizing the community college suggest changes to practice that can lead to greater congruency between the emerging postmodern environment and institutional responses to it. This said, significance is no longer a textual artifact to be measured by some universalizing criteria that can, theoretically at least, be applied uniformly. Traditional modern academic judgements wherein significance usually lay in incremental contributions to a specific discipline have been shadowed by attempts at rupture rather than continuity - so with this production. Within postmodernity, significance cannot be assumed but only addressed as textual artifact, present or absent in varying degrees, depending upon each individual's reading of the text as well as upon the particular social circumstances within which each text is produced and contained.

**The Texts:** I am writing as a member of a First World Colony called Canada. My writing works on a personal level to "re-member" myself as a postcolonial while I attempt to "de-colonize" the story of the community college in British Columbia. As Jameson says, *the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but invoke the whole laborious telling of the collectivity itself* (Jameson, as quoted in Bhabha 1990:292).

Long after the "sputnik" money of the late 1950's and early 1960's had been justified and spent, and with that the modern educational project reinvigorated throughout many areas of North America, British Columbia still preferred to answer many of its educational needs through the importation of knowledges, mostly through attracting immigrants, including many teaching today in the post-secondary system. A vibrant resource based economy required few highly educated workers, so such a strategy was not without merit in terms of capitalist economics. However, declining real prices for the province's so-called "natural" resources, combined with greater difficulties in the seemingly natural business of extracting those seemingly natural resources, changed the political as well as economic conditions. In effect, the subversion of the "staples" economy meant a provincial valorization of the

commodity called education. Post secondary education in British Columbia, in the 1970's, finally received the resources and attention given it almost everywhere else on the continent years and often decades earlier.

Unlike many other regions of the globe where a "staples" economy has been developed, and then subverted, the material wealth and modern attitudes of many of the citizens of this province offered alternate economic strategies including the development of a comprehensive college system that looked quite like the system developed in California. In 1977 the government passed the Colleges and Institutes Act creating a provincial college system that amalgamated most of the few post-secondary institutions extant, the three existing universities excepted. However, provincial per student spending on post-secondary education in British Columbia remained much below the national average, and, tellingly, remains at about one-half of what is spent in Quebec where a dynamic local culture developed in the late-modern period. When this low level of per student funding is combined with one of Canada's lowest post-secondary participation rates, an anomaly presents itself, for British Columbia is Canada's wealthiest province.

The Community College in British Columbia was a graft (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986:13), taken directly from the U.S. Wearing the clothes of the colonizer with pride, equating the importation of educational structures with progress, modernity's greatest good, flexing the authority of the educational project as it had developed in the U.S. where it was emblem and manifestation of so much that was good about the modern moment there (Dewey and pragmatism), our community college basked in that reflected light.

Like the patriarch reading to the clan, so the community college brought that reflected light to corners of the province deemed in darkness. Many corners though remained outside its reach - remained uncolonized by the American discourse of quantification and functionalism, and, in that sense, remained privileged. First Nations peoples especially, caught between governmental jurisdictions, as well as between time, were visited only lately by the light of the community college. However, they had already been recipients of forced visits by other educational lights that shone more brightly, that forced what remained of their cultures underground if they were to elude the glare of modern education.

No attempt was made to incorporate ideas from the recently displaced British empire. Privileging local ideas based in local conditions, if considered at all, was mostly written out as backward. The story of modernity and modern education as brought us colonials by, for example, the University of Chicago, had little room or respect for knowledges defined outside the metropole. That there were other colonized minds in the metropolitan region itself provided no relief, only more reinforcement for the validity of the story written there and passed on to us here.

So the knowledges in the hinterlands, the knowledges on the margins of the patriarchal, logocentric discourse of modernity, died or stayed underground, while the logocentric knowledges unique to the non-indigenous peoples in this region never gained in status, held hostage to the ideology of North American Corporate Capitalism. The functionalism and positivism of the American academy, expressed variously and effectively, especially through modern media, constructed and legitimized a new Canadian cosmology, a neo-colonialism that could not do other than buttress a freshly imported academic and societal status quo. That supposedly oppositional stories spoke in the language of the American academy provides recognition of its effectiveness as a totalizing discourse.

Because of the particular time from which they emerged fully formed, British Columbia's grafted community colleges maintain a unique position within a vast, postmodern education system (or non-system), euphemistically and postmodernly called a "knowledge industry", wherein knowledge, ironically, has gone missing, replaced by information (in 1982 there were 192 registered private training institutions in the province, in 1993 over 800). These colleges were constructed on the cusp of modernity, that cusp itself symbolic of the corresponding and developing transparency of the modern condition. They exhibit the personal characteristics of those who live life on-the-edge, creative and self-confident the one moment, self-destructive and morose the next, always schizoid through and through, being one thing for one audience one minute, another thing for another audience the next, these characteristics themselves part of what Jameson (1991) identified as a postmodern condition.

The fast-changing social (and physical) landscape gave these institutions their peculiar definition, colour and tone. Their demeanour, like their times, was contradictory, though always insensitive in the way only the impersonality of modernity can be. Rooted, though not firmly, in modern structural and functionalist responses to the needs of late-modern capitalist society, the colleges incorporated the gaps and anomalies that had become evident during the "discursive explosion" of the 1960's. The British Columbia community college, an institution built on the edge of time, a construction never truly conscious of its place in time or space, or of its place within the provincial (or federal) educational system at large, lurched from modernity to postmodernity, still not cognizant that it was a captive creature in the journey between time.

### **Deconstructing Text - Canada's Community Colleges**

*Organizations as a symbolic product are 'written' and can be regarded as 'texts'* (Linstead, 1993:57). Reading the organization called the community college along with a book about it, that reading informed by the shadow cast over modern educational practices by Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and other postmodernists,

demonstrates how modern theory and practice mutually reinforce the inadequacy of the modern project of education in British Columbia's community colleges. Deconstruction as technique fits so closely with knowledge as dominant narrative, as developed by Lyotard and Foucault, that the two work hand-in-glove. This integrative approach suggests a novel synthetic, though a synthetic focused on systemic and institutional power effects.

The book, *Canada's Community Colleges A Critical Analysis* is a widely used resource in post-secondary educational studies in Canada. As the liner notes attest, a story is constructed wherein "*community colleges evolved in Canada during the 'golden years' of education administration between 1960 and 1975...*", with the authors "...evaluating the extent to which often idealistic early goals have been realized". This book is an exemplar and a manifestation and artifact of epic modernity, moving as it does from a "golden age" to the "harsher realities of the present", this narrative style supplying ideological justification for social maintenance at the level of narrative structure, as well as at the level of the script itself. Indeed the narrative structure itself is a metaphor for lives captured, like Odysseus's, by uncontrollable events. Such metaphors construct the "naturalness" of lives lived in thrall of outside power, when the thrall and the power as well as the light and the glory emanating from it are obvious social constructions (Foucault).

Any Critical Analysis since the work of the Frankfurt School began some fifty years ago, by definition should concern itself with looking beneath surface appearances of "reality" to discern, for example, practices, institutions and structures that conceal and legitimate existing relations of power. By not doing that, for one, and yet referring to their production as a critical analysis, these authors have, perhaps innocently, reproduced the neo-colonial, logocentric, and, of course, patriarchal discourse of educational organization studies that usually passes for critique amongst the administrators of British Columbia's community colleges.

A romantic and heroic epic (Jeffcut, 1993:29-30) sees these authors bringing "strong, straightforward medicine" to an "ailing though vital body", afflicted by funding crises, the vagaries of politics, technological change, organizational growth, interest group politics, recalcitrant faculty and victimized staff, all this played out against a background of changing student profiles and managerial inconstancy. Institutional and personal "burn-out", that most modern of afflictions cannot but result when the anomalies between the "official" story and the happenings on the ground differ so much. It is uncanny how this epic parallels the reading so many employees of the British Columbia's colleges have of their organizations, where many employees, managers included, feel victimized. Working under this template cannot but channel and severely limit possible institutional responses to its environments.

In this saga, organizational harmony and with that, quality education are an ever-



receding good, just like the progress that is supposedly built into modernity. The end is always written as the story begins, the formula itself an agent of the status-quo. Closure with resolution is gained through authorial prescription rather than through exposure of the bankruptcy of the narrative fundamentals.

Privileging difference is more acceptable now that modernity has been labelled a metanarrative and the philosophy underpinning it labelled logocentrism. Within postmodernism, manual labour can become as privileged, or more privileged, than sedentary undertakings, postcolonial canadian studies can be valorized along with studies of many "first" languages. Critical citizenship education, and cultural and media studies can form the basis for a revalorized education available to every student, concepts like career and vocational relegated to a postdiscipline labelled "modern studies".

The homogenizing agenda of "business" can be read as another totalizing discourse. NAFTA can be studied to discern how the Postmodern Corporatism of Business will construct new colonialisms under the rubric of the "knowledge industry". Modern disciplines, like Economics and Psychology, will loose their spaces inside the building and out on the street. Stories gone unheard, reduced to shadow by the glare of modern education, will find audiences listening for new knowledges to take them beyond the abyss of a "dead but still dominant" modernity as well as the Black Hole of Postmodernity, a new corporatism based in the hegemony of transnational capital.

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## ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING, the LEARNING ORGANIZATION, and ADULT EDUCATION

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### Abstract

In this paper we will present and critically analyze the literature on organizational learning and the learning organization. After recalling the historical context of the emergence of these two concepts, their conceptual differences will be clarified. The main portion of this paper will identify and discuss the five schools of thought that deal today with organizational learning and the learning organization. We will point out the main weaknesses of each of these schools and derive, from there, the challenges for adult education.

### The Historical Context: From Bureaucracy to Business

Interest in organizational learning dates at least 30 years back (e.g. Cangelosi, V.E. and W.R. Dill, 1965; Cyert, R.M. and J.G. March, 1963), whereas the concept of the learning organization is a very recent one (Senge, 1990; Watkins and Marsick, 1993). Let us briefly examine here what these interests encompass and how they have evolved.

Interest in organizational learning is a phenomenon of the 1960s: the authors focus on bureaucracies, more generally public administrations, including the military, and try to conceptualize how these organizations innovate, undergo reform, and change. The almost rhetorical question here is whether such organizations can learn, can change. Authors assume stable structures, and organizational learning refers to ways and means by which these bureaucracies adapt, evolve and change. From such information one expects more effective ways to change stable structures.

Interest in the learning organization is a phenomenon of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and it is a response to a growing need to change. The learning organization has to be seen in the context of technological, economic, and cultural globalization, as well as deregulation of the past 5 to 10 years. Both processes have substantially accelerated competition among companies, especially large companies operating internationally (e.g. multinationals). The increasingly faster pace (e.g. acceleration of history) -- due to technological developments and cultural transformations -- intensifies this overall competition. Three factors have contributed, in our view, to the idea of the learning organization.

In the context of a shift to a so-called post-industrial society, information and knowledge have become important factors of production in services, but more and more so even in manufacturing. Given this key role of information and knowledge, of increasing speed and the growing global competition, learning has come to be seen, since the late 1980s, as one of the few means by which companies can still achieve a competitive advantage: the faster a company can learn -- i.e., adapt to changes, anticipate new market trends, and innovate --, the bigger the chances to thrive or simply survive in the global, competitive marketplace.

Secondly, the prominence of the idea of the learning organization would not have been possible without the movement towards Total Quality Management (TQM) during the 1980s. TQM shifts the attention of an organization to its customers and to the market, and seeks to redefine and redesign the organization, especially its processes, in light of the customers' demands. This shift of attention -- i.e., away from the stable

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organization to the instable market and volatile customers -- still added to the organization's need to learn. It is in this context that the idea and the term of the learning organization was born (e.g. Senge, 1990).

Moreover, this shift of attention, from inward to outward, has led to yet another argument for the learning organization: indeed, the outward orientation of the organization, combined with the increasingly rapid cultural changes in society have significantly contributed to the internal fragmentation of organizations. As a result, many organizations have come to reflect the fragmentations of the post-modern world (e.g. Hassard and Parker, 1993). Consequently, the learning organization is now also seen as a key factor in maintaining and rebuilding an organization's internal coherence and culture (e.g. Bahlmann, 1990).

The learning organization must thus mainly be seen in respect to economic competition and economic and cultural survival. Quite logically, therefore, the literature on the learning organization, as opposed to the literature on organizational learning, mainly refers to business, especially big business. Only very recently, and not surprisingly as a result of the introduction of TQM efforts into the public sector, has the learning organization come to be mentioned in the context of government and governmental agencies (e.g. Auditor General of Canada, 1992). This interest of the public sector for TQM and the learning organization (e.g. Osborne and Gaebler, 1992) is of course the direct result of the fact that governments and governmental agencies, too, are now under financial pressures as a result of globalization, deregulation, fiscal problems, and growing citizens demands. In short, in the global marketplace both governments and businesses need to make learning a key factor if they want to thrive and sometimes simply survive.

#### Organizational Learning vs Learning Organization -- A Conceptual Clarification

Let us briefly clarify the historical meaning of the terms: by organizational learning authors mean the processes by which organizations change and can be changed. These are generally conceived as relatively stable and coherent units. This definition is mostly held by social scientists in the fields of sociology, public administration, and public policy. It mainly reflects a research perspective, and thus locates the researcher as a disinterested individual outside of the organization.

By learning organizations authors mean the active promotion and organization of learning activities within a given organization or organizational subunit. Such organizations can or cannot be stable or coherent. The perspective here is not to analytically describe change, rather to actively foster it, and by this to adapt to changes that have taken place outside of the organization. This definition is mostly held by authors affiliated with management or management studies, in particular people engaged in organizational development, human resource development, and training. Individuals holding this perspective are less interested in research and often have a stake in the organizational development process. When these individuals use the term organizational learning, they mean learning within the organization, as opposed to learning of the organization, which is the original meaning of the term.

#### From Bureaucracy to Business: Five Schools of Thought

We propose to distinguish five schools of thought among the various authors who have written about organizational learning and the learning organization over the past 30 years. In identifying these schools we will proceed historically.

The first and oldest school of thought basically deals with organizational continuity. Jim March is certainly its most typical representative (Levitt and March, 1988; March, 1991), but many authors from public administration and other social sciences have embraced his perspective on organizational learning up to today (e.g. Mazmanian, D. and J. Nienaber, 1979). As we have mentioned above, the organization is seen here as a

stable and coherent unit. This is because organizations, among authors of this school of thought, are mainly bureaucracies and governmental units. The main question here is how *"organizations encode, store, and retrieve the lessons of history despite the turnover of personnel and the passage of time"* (Levitt and March: 1988:319). In other words, the question is how organizations adapt to changes while maintaining continuity, a typical problem of bureaucratic institutions.

This school of thought conceptualizes the organization as being composed of routines (procedures, structure) and organizational memory (culture, beliefs, frames, paradigm, etc.). Learning thus occurs when routines and organizational memory are applied to new situations, which basically reflects the distinction between structure and culture. Organizational learning, either through trial-and-error or organizational search, leads organizations to gradually adopt new routines, procedures, and strategies that lead to favorable outcomes (Levitt and March, 1988:322). In short, learning is about reform, integration of innovations, and adaptation. Learning is basically conceived along a cybernetic model, where the goal remains homeostasis. However, homeostasis might no longer be a desirable goal, and internal coherence and stability, which this models assumes, might no longer be reality. Moreover, this is also problematic in that organizational learning is seen as taking place independently, or even despite individual learning.

A second school of thought -- which like the previous one also uses the term organizational learning -- is basically interested in a social theory of action (e.g. Whyte, 1991). Reacting, during the 1970s, against the implicit conservatism of the previous model, authors of this school of thought were looking for ways and means to more actively change organizations from inside. Chris Argyris (1983; 1992) and at times Donald Schön (Argyris and Schön, 1978) are the most typical representatives here. They still conceive of organizations as being static and coherent. Seeking to change them, therefore, requires action and at times an activist perspective. Referring back to Kurt Lewin's T-group and the laboratory approach to learning, this school of thought has mainly come to be affiliated with organizational development (OD) efforts, a process by which a third-party consultant or interventionist assists an organizational team in individual and organizational learning, thus leading to planned organizational change (Ventriss and Luke, 1988:341).

Like the previous school of thought, Argyris also conceptualizes the organization as being composed of routines (structures) and organizational memory (culture). Organizational learning, according to him, occurs when routines and organizational norms are examined and changed through a process called double-loop-learning. If single-loop learning is simply cybernetic, i.e., focuses on the correction of manifest errors and helps the organization maintain homeostasis, double-loop learning gets at the organizational norms and culture. They need to be changed in order for the organization to become fully functional. In other words, double-loop learning -- the prototype of organizational learning according to Argyris -- is transformative and at times subversive. This is because the underlying social theory of action can be traced back to action science, action learning, action research, participatory research, and participatory action research.

The advantage of this conceptualization of organizational learning over the previous school of thought is that it introduces an action component, as well as it accounts for the role of the learner in organizational change and development. However, this school of thought still assumes organizational coherence, stability, and continuity, something that is questionable today. If the previous school of thought had seen both the structural and the cultural dimensions of the organization, the social theory of action sees organizational learning mainly as related to cultural change.



Like the organizations it seeks to describe, this third school of thought is basically in transition. We include in it the various authors writing during the 1980s about organizational learning mainly from a management perspective. Their main intellectual interest is to adapt the original conceptualization of organizational learning as a cybernetic system to the new and increasingly changing context of the 1980s (e.g. Daft and Huber, 1987; Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Hedberg, 1981; Shrivastava, 1981). They all display an interest in business organizations, rather than in bureaucracies, but do not take up the action component Argyris had brought forth. Instead, they put, again, a stronger accent on organizational structure.

They all conclude that the reality -- the one of the 1980s and the one of business organizations -- is too complex to be accounted for by the traditional bureaucratic and homeostatic model of organizational learning. The main contribution of these authors is therefore a more sophisticated view on organizational learning. For example, they distinguish between organizational adaptation and change on the one hand and organizational learning on the other, a confusion often made by the first school of thought. They also distinguish between different types of organizational learning systems (Shrivastava, 1981) and between different levels of learning (Fiol and Lyles, 1985). Finally, they also look more closely into the changing environment and how this affects organizational learning (Hedberg, 1981).

In short, this "transitional school of thought" now offers a picture of high complexity, probably reflecting the changing nature of the organizations during the 1980s. Yet, no clear and coherent theory of organizational learning emerges during this period and among these writers.

It is up to Peter Senge (1990) to capture all these transformations of business organizations during the 1980s and the various attempts to respond to these changes by the new concept of the learning organization. By conceptualizing organizations as learning systems -- as opposed to slowly evolving bureaucracies (hierarchical and military model) --, Senge operates a paradigm shift, that allows him to integrate, in a quite simple framework, complex processes (e.g. the link between structural change and cultural transformations), contradictory trends (e.g. adaptation vs change), and conflictual approaches (e.g. social action): if previous authors painted a picture of complexity, contradiction, conflict, resistance to change, and advocates of a social theory of action sometimes gave the the impression that management was more interested in preserving the status quo, Senge's theory of the learning organization changes all that.

The organization is now conceptualized as a highly abstract, de-materialized, information processing system. His systemic view actually reflects the change that has taken place in management theory during the 1980s towards holistic thinking, inspired by developments in computer science (e.g. Norbert Wiener), physics (e.g. Frijtof Capra, David Bohm), and biology (e.g. Gregory Bateson, Joël de Rosnay, Frederic Vester, Rupert Sheldrake) (Ulrich and Probst, 1988). More recently, management thinking has even more clearly moved into this New Age direction which confuses post-modern fragmentation (a cultural phenomenon) with "order from chaos" (a physical phenomenon) (e.g. Bergquist, 1993; Wheatley, 1992). In short, with Senge and his followers, the organization becomes a "learning system" (e.g. Nevis, DiBella, and Gould, 1993). Learning loses its subversive dimensions to become a productive force. Personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning, the ingredients of a learning organization according to Senge, turn into competitive advantages. The managers are rehabilitated back in their role and become key facilitators or organizers of collective learning. Thanks to the learning organization, business will be able to "thrive on chaos".

The problem with Senge's approach and much of the literature on the learning organization it has engendered is, in our view, that it is ideological, not empirically

grounded. Systems thinking -- especially its New Age versions -- is fundamentally a-structural, a-social, a-political, and therefore a-gendered, and a-conflictual. This is not what organizations, as empirical realities, are like. Senge and much of the learning organization literature disregards the accumulated knowledge of the previous three schools of thought, as it ignores empirical knowledge about adult learning, and confuses organizational culture and structure, proactive change and reactive adaptation, as well as it obscures -- in some abstract idea of mental models and shared visions -- the complex relationship between individual learning and organizational reality.

But this concept of the learning organization has opened up a whole new field of practice: capacity-building for the learning organization. Corporate trainers (e.g. Savage, 1990), human resources developers (e.g. Dixon, 1992), and adult educators (e.g. Watkins and Marsick, 1993) have come to define their work as contributing to the build-up of learning organizations. Though this is not really a school of thought of its own, it could certainly have the potential of becoming one. This, however, would imply to more clearly articulate the unique learning perspective that these fields of practice bring to the learning organization. Fostering learning in the learning organization should not be confused, as this is currently the case, with managing the learning organization, which is Senge's and his followers' perspective. Considering that adult education -- unlike corporate training and human resource development -- has a long tradition of both theoretical and practical independence from the business world, we suggest that adult education take the intellectual lead in defining this learning perspective on the learning organization, as well as on organizational learning.

#### Adult Education and "Management Envy"

Rather than aspiring to create organizations as learning systems (i.e., learning organizations) -- which in our view is a management task -- adult education should see its role, more modestly, in contributing to organizational learning. Adult education could, indeed, make a unique and significant contribution to both organizational learning and the learning organization, given in particular its unique perspective on social action and social change, as well as on action-oriented transformative learning. However, adult education would have to critically examine some of its intellectual weaknesses, in particular the absence of a clearly articulated link between individual learning and both structural and cultural change, be it in the organization or elsewhere. Finally, in order to make its unique contribution to both organizational learning and the learning organization, adult education would have to develop a solid research base.

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## WOMEN'S LEARNING IN LEISURE

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**Abstract:** This study asked, "What meanings do women give to learning in leisure?" Learning in leisure was described by the women as a holistic, simultaneous and on-going process of seeking-the-self.

### Introduction

Adult education is most often concerned with understanding learning as it takes place in formal settings, for example, in higher or continuing education. Such a lens is inadequate. Studying learning in formal settings does not provide an adequate view of adults' learning. First, formal settings are only one setting in which learning takes place. Most learning actually takes place outside the classroom (Bergevin, 1967; Tough, 1979; Collins, 1991), in daily life, and takes place all the time. Second, conceptualizations of learning in formal settings have often been portrayed as universal, that is, as a broad, objective depiction of universal truth. For example, self-directed learning, with its emphasis on autonomy, has been portrayed as a goal of the teaching/learning exchange, often referred to as "facilitating self-directed learning" (Mezirow, 1981; Brookfield, 1986; Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991). This imposition of self-direction as a universal value and way of being is made, irregardless of literature which suggests that learning for many women is a collaboratively-directed learning (Haring-Hidore, 1990; Flannery, 1994). Third, studying learning in formal settings is problematic because the settings themselves limit peoples' learning. For example, women's learning is limited in institutions. The reproduction of gender divisions in schools has been documented (Deem, 1978; Thompson, 1983). Institutions have neglected or minimized women's lives and their concerns in course content and methods of teaching (Hootsman, 1980; Thompson, 1983; Hayes, 1989). Therefore, it is imperative that learning be studied outside of formal institutional settings (Collins, 1991), and that it be concerned with the meanings of learning in the everyday lives of adults. Furthermore, those to whom learning theory has been generalized, and those who have been marginalized in formal learning institutions, must be studied as learners.

This paper specifically focuses on studying women as learners, since women have been ignored, marginalized and minimized in formal learning settings. Women's learning in leisure is studied because leisure is a context where women's learning may be less limited by societal and gender prescriptions than in other life areas. Havighurst (1973) argues that society has not developed expectations for appropriate behaviors and attitudes in leisure to the extent that it has for other societal contexts. Deem (1986) also contends that the reproduction of gender divisions may not pervade leisure to the extent that they do other realms of life. This is logical given that the primary dimension of leisure is perceived as freedom of choice (Kelly, 1982; Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1989; Neulinger, 1982).

### Methodology

Because this research asked, "What meanings do women give to learning in leisure?", the methodology used in this study was qualitative/ naturalistic research. Conceptualizations of the meanings of learning were left to the study participants.

The research was gathered through audio-taped interviews which took place in the women's homes and lasted from one to one and a half hours. Interview participants were part of a larger 36 year panel study examining the meaning of role, value, function and experience of four areas of life: leisure, work, family and education which had begun when they were first grade students in 10 Wisconsin communities. Those selected to be interviewed were a convenience sample, selected because they had completed a 1986 mail survey, had complete files for the larger longitudinal study, and resided in an area accessible to being interviewed.



Data analysis searched for general statements about personal meanings of learning and learning experiences and relationships among the emergent categories of data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Cross-case analysis provided themes across respondents (Patton, 1990). As qualitative naturalistic research, women's experiences of learning and the meanings of those experiences were examined in the context of the women's lives (van Maanen, 1983). "Without context, our words, our actions, have no meaning at all" (Bateson, 1978, p. 12). Extant literature was used primarily to understand the phenomenon after the data has been collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

**Data Source:** Thirty-one European-American women between 36 and 43 years of age were interviewed for this study. Eighty-one percent of the participants were married or in partnership, 19% were divorced or separated. Forty-two percent had completed high school. The remainder had some college experience, fairly evenly divided among 1-3 years of college, 4 years of college, and graduate work. At the time of the interviews all lived in the southern half of Wisconsin or east-central Iowa.

The women were a rural cohort. They grew up in rural American, on farms or in small rural towns. Most resided in the same or similar areas to those in which they had been born and raised. Furthermore, this cohort of women were born between 1944 and 1951. Their fathers were predominantly employed as farmers, loggers, cheesemakers, or mill workers. Their mothers were typically employed in the home, working also with their husbands if there was a family business such as a farm. Traditional gender roles and gender expectations were the norms in their families. They were to complete high school, take an office or factory job, if necessary, while waiting to marry and have children.

The women in this study were young adults in the 1960s and early 1970s. As young adults they and their peers experienced the unrest and turmoil of the Viet Nam War, Civil Rights and Women's movements in the United States. As adults of the 1970s and 1980s these women had seen traditional family structures and gender role expectations challenged in the society at large.

#### **Themes and Conclusions**

The major organizing theme which emerged from the analysis of the interviews was women's learning in leisure as seeking-the-self. This seeking-the-self had many varied facets.

**Learning in Leisure as Seeking-the-Self** The most comprehensive finding of this research was that for most of the women in this study, learning in leisure was framed as *seeking-the-self*. "... it's an internal journey and it's learning how, learning who you really are, and how it all fits together..." "Learning (in leisure) ...activities serve as self-expression and confidence builder and I guess helps me to find my own self, my own self-identity."

**Seeking-the-Self in Freedom** Integrally connected to each statement of self-seeking and self-discovery was the context of "freedom". "Leisure means to be able to do what I want to, with my time...life goal is to be a centered, balanced, growing person..." "When you think of leisure, you're in complete control of your life, so I think, yeah, that your leisure activities open up options that you wouldn't get any other way." "...getting away...there's only me to think about, and I can do what I want, but I can also just be me, probably because nobody's depending upon me...it's wonderful.. but I think the real, the best of it is being able to get away a little and be you."

**Seeking-the-Self As Process** For these women, seeking-the-self was a process. It was an on-going process of learning and meaning-making. It did not have an event or end point when it was over. It simply was, and continued. The process was associated with life and living.

The process and learning-event descriptions were depicted as a unity of seeking-the-self. Within the process, while women may have engaged in learning events, (eg. attending women's week at a local university, or learning how to

raise pheasants) which could have been described as discrete aspects of seeking-the-self, the women did not differentiate them this way. Furthermore, women related their engagement in different facets of seeking-the-self as simultaneous and with no notion of ranking placed on the facets. Women walked, soaked in a warm bath, learned to weave from friends, and read about how to be an antique dealer.

Learning in Leisure was Situated in Social, Cultural, and Historical Contexts Women's learning in leisure was clearly situated in being aware of, and negotiating with, societal structures. Such negotiation was necessary because of the fact they were women.

Negotiating involved juxtaposing decisions by self with society's structures. The women implicitly or explicitly made reference to the gender role expectations placed on them as spouse or parent when they talked about their learning in leisure. "I'm taking classes entirely for selfish reasons - things that I've wanted to learn and plus I think it's selfish too, in that you know, being a mother, or working, you're always doing for other people, it's kind of a, you know, real selfish time..this hour or two I'm spending is just for my own enjoyment..." Another talked out her husband's reaction when she sat down to read a book, stating "... it's not easy to get leisure.

The women talked about the dialectic of living in their current situations, about knowing the possibilities for change and about the choices they were making in this regard. As they engaged in the seeking-of-self, the women became aware of options for their lives. For example, they realized that now in their lives they would be in a different position if they had been socialized to think of further education after high school, rather than working while waiting for marriage. They noted they deliberately chose to continue as they were, but were preparing their daughters otherwise. The women also talked about wishing they had engaged in seeking-the-self when they were teenagers, acknowledging they socialized to attend to relationships with males at that time. Finally, some of the women made reference to wishing they were in different kinds of relationships, but noted they had made their choices and would stick by them.

Several women in their journey of seeking-the-self pushed what they perceived as society's definitions of themselves as lacking ownership or economic assets and the freedom which came with them. "I wanted to do something besides staying home and taking care of children and then I found the pheasants and I was interested in them so I kind of just picked them up... but I do sell a few of them...you gotta have something (laugh) and it's my very own little thing. You know, and I think people feel very left out if they don't have something that says, 'this is mine' because your house really isn't yours 'cause your kids are in it... With the money I earned by myself, I saved and I took a trip to Germany with my sister."

Learning in Leisure as Fun Learning in leisure was constantly described by the women as "fun", connected to notions of freedom mentioned above, and contrasted with learning in school and work. "Learning is fun, not work. ..the core is, I don't have to." "Leisure learning is not the same as learning because you have to." "It's entertainment now (once a drag) anything I do as a challenge - if it isn't a challenge, I don't want to do it." "It's fun and it's selfish, too, in that, you know, being a mother - working - you're always doing for other people, and it's kind of a you know, real selfish time..this hour or two I'm spending just for my own enjoyment and.. I think that makes all the difference." "When I think of drudgery, I think of the classes I've had to take to get where I am, you know that type of thing (work-related)." "It isn't like it used to be in school - I had to learn that." "I think it was work and drudgery when I was in school, but it's the type of thing...it's my choice now." It should be noted that references to learning in school and work as drudgery and as limiting were made by women, regardless of their educational background.

Varieties in Seeking-the-Self The processes of women's learning in seeking-the-self were varied. Women went off alone. They spoke of "solitude", "places of

solitude", and "places of resourcefulness". Women gathered with others, often women. Seeking the self involved contemplation, reading, listening, speaking, doing and practicing, exchanging expertise and seeking expertise. Much of their learning involved seeking out persons who knew about what the women wanted to learn, and who would let them try it out. The unique aspect of the 'expert' role was that the women perceived it not as an issue of power held by an individual, but as an exchange of what one knew with another.

When learning was sought in a formal institutional setting the women noted they made their choices in freedom and pursued their choices with freedom to learning what they wanted, to do assignments which they chose. For example, one woman was told she needed several math courses to get into an accounting course she was interested in. She refused to take the math courses, demanded the institution test her math knowledge, went home and learned the math from the texts and passed the exam she was given.

#### Discussion of Themes

This study of women's learning in leisure raises a number of challenges to the current literature on, and practices of, learning. First, these women did not perceive they were free to learn what they wanted, except in leisure. Formal learning institutions were specifically mentioned as impeding freedom of choice in learning.

Second, the women noted they were constrained from learning, and in their learning, by gender and gender role expectations in the society. This would suggest those interested in learning research and practice at least consider a) much more investigation of women's learning and b) consider the connection of societal gender expectations to women's experience of learning in the society.

Third, the process of the women's learning involved weighing what they were learning and potential resulting behavior changes against society's expectations of them, and then making choices regarding the change. The learning literature has yet to consider not only the tensions involved in learning for women due to societal strictures, but also the contextual and social influences on the resultant choices women make.

Fourth, when women do perceive they have freedom of time and choice, they engage in learning which is the seeking-of-self. The learning literature does not address the seeking-of-self as integral to learning, much less to women's learning. While it is mentioned as motivation for participating in formal settings (e.g. Tough) as personal development, it is operationalized as a discrete reason to participate. This discrete reason is one of several, including to have a social experience, to prepare for work, to become intellectually challenged. In this study, for women, seeking-the-self was integral to motivation for learning.

Fifth, the process of seeking-the-self was conceptualized by the women as simultaneous, on-going learning whose facets ebbed and flowed and emerged and reemerged as part of a whole process. This is in contrast to processes of learning in traditional theory which delineate learning as a series of deliberate, discrete, sequential parts and steps. This conceptualization also challenges notions of self-directed learning tasks as necessarily having specific goals, beginning and end points.

Sixth, in the women's experiences in this study, the learning for these women occurs alone/with others as part of the process. Others are not an "add-on"; They are an integral part of the self. Too, others and the self are in an exchange. One learns in order to share with others. This is not the same notion as appears in the self-directed learning literature which acknowledges "use of other" in learning efforts to assist one in reaching one's goals. This emphasis in the current literature is still on the individual learning alone, with an objectifying of the other for what one can get from the other.

Seventh, there are other aspects yet neglected in the learning literature which are raised in this study. Among them, first, the fact that these

narratives are affective accounts of learning which never distinguish between affect and cognitive, and second the issue of learning through solitude,

In summary, learning in leisure for the women in this study was a seeking-of-self, "a conscious search for meaning" (Green, 1978). It was a process which "effected new connections in experience, thematized, problematized and imposed diverse patterns on the inchoateness" (Greene, 1978) of the self in relation to the structures of society. Learning in leisure helped free the women from the "personal, institutional and environmental forces that prevented them from seeing new directions, from gaining control over their lives, their society and the world." (Apps, 1985).



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**WHEN MORE IS LESS: PERCEIVED BARRIERS  
TO COLLABORATIVE LEARNING BY ADULT COLLEGE STUDENTS**

By

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**Abstract**

Collaborative learning is postulated as a principle of effective facilitation of adult learning; little research regarding the effectiveness of this instructional strategy has been conducted. This paper presents findings gleaned from research conducted at four colleges with adult students, revealing common barriers to collaborative learning in need of examination and discussion.

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The power and promise of collaborative learning as a means to enhance the learning experience for adults is a recurring theme in adult education literature. Even varying philosophical perspectives on the nature and desired outcomes of adult learning seem to find common agreement in promoting collaborative methods for facilitating educational experiences. Knowles (1980) asserts that collaboration is integral to the establishment of effective learning environments for adults, building mutual trust and cooperation among learners. Freire (1970) supports that collaborative learning is at the heart of the dialogic process, a process formed among instructors and learners. Mezirow (1978) advances the idea that perspective transformation or the process of making new meaning perspectives requires association with others. Brookfield (1986) includes commitment to collaborative learning among his six characteristics of effective facilitation of adult learning.

While receiving support as a means to facilitate learning among adults, the term collaborative learning is either vaguely defined or not defined at all by the authors, giving the impression that there is a universally accepted definition of the concept in the field of adult education. Most of the literature focuses on the instructor-student interrelationship and fails to address the process and problems of initiating and maintaining an optimal group experience. Since most of the adult education literature is of a philosophical nature and not research-based, several unexamined assumptions about the efficacy of collaborative learning experiences exist. Issues of power, privilege, and competition within groups are not discussed. Other assumptions are made regarding learner preparedness and willingness to function as a group member without benefit of rehearsal, modeling, coaching, or other interventions on the part of the instructor. Finally, there seems to be some commonly implied outcomes of collaborative learning endeavors. Collaborative learning is seen as an effective vehicle for

fostering critical reflection, for empowering learners, for promoting consensus, and for producing learning that would exceed what an individual could accomplish alone.

### Statement of the Problem

The unexamined assumptions about collaborative learning lead to questions about the implementation and effective facilitation of collaborative learning. Research is needed which examines the issues and problems of introducing and enhancing collaborative learning processes with adult learners. This study attempts to describe how the process of collaborative learning is perceived by adult learners and how faculty attitudes toward and knowledge of collaborative learning enhance or impede the learning process when implementing this instructional method.

### Research Method

A qualitative research approach was utilized in order to gain greater insight into the perceptions of adult students and faculty regarding their experience with collaborative learning processes. A total of twenty-six students and twenty faculty members were interviewed from four institutions of continuing higher education. A semi-structured, private interview was conducted with each individual. Each interview was taped and transcribed. Additionally, students were asked to respond in writing to positive and negative critical incident questionnaires. All data were coded, using a grounded theory approach.

For purposes of this study, collaborative learning is defined as a process in which facilitator and learners work together in identifying and exploring perceptions, beliefs, opinions, and understandings, including but not limited to developing curriculum, determining methods, carrying out activities, and selecting evaluative criteria.

### Findings

While some students reported positive benefits and aspects of collaborative learning, three major categories of barriers surfaced. These barriers included: (1) instructional delivery problems; (2) logistical concerns; and, (3) interpersonal constraints.

Students experienced problems that were a result of poor instructional planning on the part of faculty introducing and facilitating collaborative group methods. The difficulties ranged from ill-defined tasks to lack of nurturance by the instructor in guiding students into group tasks.

You're in a group and you all have different goals and different ideas of what the project really entails...

I have a problem working with other students. I've never done a lot of group situations and I'm not really used to that. I'm very protective of what I'm responsible for...

The lack of facilitator guidance and his/her failure to promote

the value of utilizing other students' experiences and feedback contributed to students' reluctance to engage in or find a benefit from collaborative learning.

For some students, it was not the collaborative activity that was fraught with difficulty but the logistical concerns of distance, time, and outside commitments which caused problems when group activities were required outside the class meeting time. Students remarked that it was:

A nightmare. Everytime I've been involved in a project with students because, I think it may be different if you worked, if you lived in the university setting and you were together...But as an adult learner and as a non-traditional student I may never see these people again from one class to another and we all have our own lives and [we all are] working full-time.

It's very difficult to have group projects because of the distance factor.

A third and final set of barriers were identified as interpersonal constraints -- conditions and dynamics that surfaced from the group process and that were felt by students to negate the benefits of collaborative learning experiences. One difficulty perceived by the students was the varying level of commitment to the work and its quality within a group task.

I drive myself and most people don't...And I think I would be less than happy to do it...I would probably take on as much responsibility as I could and then I would feel overwhelmed in the end.

Other problems arose from communication difficulties and from issues of power within the group. Power struggles emanated from gender, expertise, and cultural differences.

You have [several] totally different points of view, trying to mesh into one paper. I think that would be really hard because you're going to come out with one dominant person who is going to take control and do it their way, whether it's right or wrong, however they feel about it.

Finally, other interpersonal constraints which limited the efficacy of collaborative learning experience included resistance to interdependence with other group members and the devaluation of community efforts.

...You're basically still only going to get first hand knowledge of your own and you're going to hear second hand knowledge of everyone else. And if I get a 90 instead of 100, you can bet your butt, I'm not happy.

Faculty attitudes toward and lack of knowledge regarding collaborative learning techniques and processes may have



contributed to the barriers students experienced. Faculty interviews revealed a number of negative perceptions about collaborative learning, including resistance to loss of control in the classroom, a lack of knowledge or expertise in how to integrate collaborative techniques in specific subject matter, and a bewilderment over how to foster cooperation among students. Faculty were at a loss as to how to implement an evaluative process to monitor collaborative learning outcomes and were concerned that students would resist group projects. Negative attitudes regarding collaborative learning experiences were frequently expressed and representative statements are among the following:

I don't think it's a wonderful idea at all. This is one of those things that I think it's demeaning to force people to participate when they don't want to participate.

Nor do I like this business of forcing people to participate in a small group in order to encourage team work or some such thing that I try to avoid all the trendy things that come down the line. Every six months it's something else.

Nothing worse than 10 work groups in which each group is given an assignment and each one has a recorder and each one has a chairperson. It's like, it's almost collective ignorance.

In spite of the general tone of negativity regarding collaborative learning on the part of those interviewed, there were positive benefits of collaborative learning discussed as well, although not as frequently. The most prominent themes emerging from student comments were appreciation for collegiality and learning from others, a greater comfort level and emotional support through participation in smaller groups, and a recognition of the value of alternative learning activities. As one student pointed out:

I guess I like to work with people, to be with people...I think it keeps me motivated. I always want to go ahead and do my part, I don't want to bring anybody down...I think I do my best work like that. By myself, I struggle.

Some faculty expressed support for collaborative learning, indicating that collaborative learning strategies can offer a means for alternative learning situations, particularly in long instructional periods, that it can offer opportunities for bringing together varying backgrounds and perspectives, and that it can offer more comfort for students to participate in the class, who otherwise would find classroom participation threatening. One faculty member expressed that it offered a means to bolster low self-confidence and self-esteem. Another discussed it as a means for students to teach each other.

...I try to get my students to work together in study

groups. I try to get them to work together in labs, quiz one another, question one another, because I think the best learning tool is teaching. And if they are teaching one another, then they are learning. And also it helps build camaraderie among them.

Clearly, however, in contrast to the adult education literature which suggests that collaborative learning is an underpinning of adult learning, students and faculty in this study did not offer unqualified support. Many expressed misgivings and negative experiences. This pattern of response suggests that further exploration of the concept is necessary for effective implementation in the classroom.

#### Implications for Practice

For collaborative learning to be a viable instructional strategy to be utilized with adults, it seems basic but critical that there be a recognition that collaborative learning is not necessarily a "natural" or preferred method of learning for adult learners. Consequently, a more systematic framework for developing and implementing collaborative learning processes in the classroom needs to be established. Of major importance is the professional development of faculty. Instructors need to come to a philosophical understanding and an appreciation for the value of collaborative learning before such strategies can be successfully implemented in the classroom. An effective means for developing such understanding is the use of critical incident techniques, in which faculty can examine their own positive and negative experiences with collaborative learning. Using this technique, faculty can gain insights with respect to both the benefits and the negative aspects of collaborative learning and can use these insights as a basis for their own practice. Understanding group processes and group dynamics are also invaluable tools for faculty for all aspects of classroom learning, but particularly for collaborative learning endeavors. Such knowledge can assist with issues of task management, dominance of some group members, group conflicts, and lack of cohesion among learners.

In terms of establishing classroom processes for collaborative learning, a clear knowledge of the learner must be gained and ideally there should be a means for instructors and learners to establish parameters for the learning experiences. The use of introductory or icebreaker activities is instrumental for learners and faculty to know each other in the context of the course. Initial efforts for collaborative learning should be short-term, with clearly defined purposes, tasks, and evaluative feedback. There should be definitive links between the learning experience and the goals and content of the course, in order that the relevance of the experience to the course is not obscure to the learners. At the conclusion of the collaborative projects or activities, time needs to be given to debriefing with respect to the activity in terms of both content and process. In such a manner, issues can be resolved and potential problems can be anticipated and dealt with directly.

Obviously, the role of the instructor as facilitator in the process of collaborative learning emerges as a foremost factor for implementation strategies. Establishing the instructor's role in the context of each collaborative learning experience is crucial. At any given time during collaborative learning activities, the instructor can serve in a variety and combination of roles, including facilitator, leader, participant, timekeeper, monitor, referee, and resource person. Most importantly, the instructor must maintain involvement and not utilize the activity as busy work and gap-fillers. Some suggestions for instructors were generated from the students interviewed, including:

Keep in touch with the students. Keep a close contact on a regular basis, how are things going, what do you think about this, what are you doing, those kinds of things.

Probably explain to us exactly what he wants and present it to us and we can probably look at it and see who can do what part.

Additionally, instructors need to consider issues that are critical for students in their planning of collaborative learning activities. These issues include:

1. Understanding the out-of-class demands on students;
2. Planning in-class time, if possible, for collaborative learning activities;
3. Recognizing power issues associated with gender, ethnicity, and culture;
4. Understanding the pressures of grading for students and establishing with learners processes that seem equitable and rewarding;
5. Monitoring the experience and progress of students to ensure that the activity is of value as much as possible;
6. Recognizing that collaborative learning strategies cannot be the sole purpose for learning -- alternatives are necessary.

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## A MODEL FOR TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL ACTION

### Group for Collaborative Inquiry

**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores the transformative learning process as affirming a world view grounded in an understanding of reality as permutable and interconnected. The process involves moving from cultural embeddedness through learning-in-relationship and whole person learning. An integration of phenomenology and heuristics, the research involved 132 interviews and reflections on the researchers' lived experience of the transformative learning process.

#### A PARABLE:

And it came to pass that on the third day of the thirtieth year in the age of Chaos, three seekers stopped by a well to take drink. It was just recently that the three had met. For years each had traveled through the countryside. In that journey, each saw the land lay waste because the people had plundered its bounty without care. The cities had crumbled and the streets were strewn with refuse. People wandered without homes. Children killed children and race fought race while the rich built walls against the clamor of the hungry multitudes.

On the night they met, each seeker told of her quest. Each had sought in her own place to learn how the world had come to such waste and how it is that humankind can escape from its misery and suffering. The first seeker had gone to the rich, and the rich had said, "The answer lies in economics. You must go to the bazaar and make and build more riches. As you are successful in this, the poor will find work." The second seeker had gone to the universities and the professors had said, "The answer lies in knowledge. You must use the ways of science and learn to apply its answers to the problems you see." The third seeker went to the organizers of people and the organizers said, "The answer lies in collective action. You must unite together with others of like mind and make a plan and move together to change the structure. In this, the earth will flourish again and the poor will have homes and the children will play with each other."

Standing by the well, the three seekers compared their answers and found them wanting. Close by sat an old woman pounding grain and looking after the children of her children. The old woman asked, "What are you seeking my daughters." And the three seekers answered, "We seek to understand how the world has come to such waste and how it is that humankind can escape from its misery and suffering." The old woman turned to the seekers. "The answer cannot be found outside, my daughters. Nor is it within." She continued, "The way is the end and the end is the way."

The three seekers pondered her words to find their meaning.

The purpose of this paper is to reconceptualize transformative learning and social action in a way that extends the theoretical work of Paulo Freire (1982) and Jack Mezirow (1990, 1991). Through an empirical description of the transformative learning process, we illuminate aspects of the process that Freire and Mezirow mention only briefly: learning-in-relationship and whole person learning. We also affirm a world view--congruent with the current social construction of post



modernism--which is grounded in an understanding of reality as permutable and interconnected.

Our research methodology integrates the orientations of phenomenology and heuristics in which the data from five individual case studies are merged with data from our lived experiences of the transformative learning process. Each of the five case studies was conducted by an individual investigator. All used interviews, document collection, and field observation. The individual investigators then formed a single team who, through group discussion and reflection, approached the five-study data set phenomenologically, searching for essences of transformation that were common among the separate studies. The team returned to the original raw data to check its emerging analysis, ultimately engaging in several cycles of discussion and re-examination of the data. During these cycles, a heuristic inquiry emerged in which we as researchers asked "What is our experience of this phenomenon?" Our reflections on our own experience aided us in understanding the "essences" of the transformative learning process. The primary data sources for this research, therefore, are the experiences described by the 132 persons who were interviewed in the individual research projects and our lived experiences of the transformative learning process.

This paper begins with a conceptual discussion of the themes that have emerged in our research. In the second section, we introduce these themes in the life experiences of one of the women in the original studies. Lastly, the paper concludes with data from our lived experience to portray further the concepts of our discussion.

#### CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION:

Returning to A Parable, we explore the words of the old woman: "The answer cannot be found outside, my daughters. Nor is it within. The way is the end and the end is the way." These seemingly paradoxical statements provide an entry in appreciating the world view affirmed by our data. This world view is informed by two understandings of the world. First, no permanent, fixed realities exist; reality is permutable. And no distinct and impermeable boundaries separate us from each other; all is interconnected. This means that we see both the self and society as continuous processes of psychological and social events, rather than as distinct and separate entities. So the answer for which the seekers were searching is always within for there is no separateness.

Our conceptualization of transformative learning is a process of coming increasingly to understand the world as permutable and without boundaries. In concrete terms, it is the process of coming to understand that "you and I" are neither fixed and enduring, nor separate.

The way we move toward this understanding is through what has come to be called in the adult education literature "transformations." Generally, this means the progressive liberation from the limitations of the constructs we have come to use in order to make sense of the world. In other words, we learn to see particular constructs as "not truth," but merely as a way of structuring our experience of the world. We also learn that these constructs are only as important or powerful as we allow them to be. The result is that we become increasingly able to move among multiple constructs without embedding ourselves in any of them.

We have also come to understand the process of transformation as facilitated first and foremost by our relationships with others, and our awareness and use of all the functions we have available for knowing, including our cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual dimensions. For the first, we recognize that just as we participate in the construction of others and society, they participate in our ongoing construction. For the second, we acknowledge that our awareness of the multiple functions we have available for knowing provides us with an enhanced capacity to recognize how our constructs drive the form of our interactions.

These ideas have consequences for both how we think about social action and how we live. First, social action is commonly thought of as an individual or collective movement to change the "other." Boundaries between "us" and "them" are seen as solid and permanent. We think of ourselves as being in opposition to each other: locked in separate and incompatible constructs. Transformative learning as it relates to social action is liberatory in that we come to see the ways in which "the others'" construction of our world have come to be not only their construction, but ours, as well. Our own construction has become obscured. Social action is predicated on the transformation in consciousness by which we hold the dominating "other" perspective up as arbitrary yet fundamental to the maintenance of the unjust power relationships that exist.

If we focus on the transformative dynamic of learning-in-relationship, social action can no longer be understood as action focused on changing the "other." Rather, it must be understood as our coming to interact out of an ever developing understanding of what is worthwhile and valuable in our relationships. We can see ourselves as not only creating ourselves through our actions and interactions with others, but creating society. We are a part of all humanity and the natural world. Our relationship is one of participation rather than opposition.

Since this view of social action is participative in nature, it means that we must challenge the universality of our own constructions. Learning to live multiple constructions of the world challenges both our yearning for permanence and for discrete boundaries. We find that we cannot become embedded in any construction of the world--ours or others. No particular construction provides an adequate and

permanent frame for our experience of the world. We must move among them, recognizing the limited nature of each.

Reconceptualizing the transformative learning process, in summary, involves affirming a world view that emphasizes permutability and interconnectedness. Additionally, it means coming to understand that the transformative learning process must be grounded in learning-in-relationship and whole person learning. Echoing *A Parable*, our transformation becomes the way and at the same time our transformation becomes the end.

**TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING PROCESS--LOUISE:** Louise is a lawyer and has held public office in the legislative branch of the federal government. While she raised her children, she attended law school at night. Beginning her professional career in early mid-life, she was asked to work for the passage of the ERA. Her response--"I don't need that stuff"--emanated from her world view "that the only concern I had was what was happening to me." She was embedded in a culture that held that if she had worked hard and made it in a man's world so could everyone else. Her transformative learning process began, though, as her work in the DA's office brought her into relationship with battered women. She recalled: "They were people--problems I could touch. . . In the nature of the crimes we had, we had a lot more emotional involvement than most DA's . . . it was learning to deal with people and the systems. And I turned around--I'll never forget it." This learning process involved Louise's differentiating from the dominant culture and recognizing that it did not provide an adequate frame for her experience. Most poignantly, Louise related a story of an abused child in which she discovered the permutability and interconnectedness of reality. "I mean emotionally--I would go home--I had one child that was so severely beaten--she was four years old--burned and dipped in water." Louise described her personal relatedness to this child. "I went home that day and went to my bathroom and sat in my tub and cried. I said to my husband--'She's four years old, a white baby, nobody wanted her. She had been in the system for cigarette burns all over her body and they brought her back because they said the biological mother was the best place for her to go.' I mean I dealt with the system; it was just awful what was happening to kids. And I cried because we always wanted a fourth and I had such a rough pregnancy with the third so we never had--I said I would have taken her. I would have taken her. This was a child and there was no reason for her to be dead".

Louise explicitly described her whole person learning of the horror that this child experienced. The depth of Louise's emotional pain and her interconnectedness with the child culminated in her own need for physical release--tears. This child's physical suffering and emotional deprivation became the focus of Louise's continued critique of the system. Subsequently, Louise left the DA's office and was elected to the legislature. Her work on behalf of the abused has led to legislative

changes which adequately protect battered persons. This action to change the structures of society resulted from the transformative dimensions of her learning-in-relationship and whole person learning.

**TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING PROCESS--ELIZABETH:** Elizabeth, a member of our collaborative group, relates a story of her lived experience of transformative learning. She begins: "My story is about my personal journey toward commitment to collaborative knowledge-making. In this story, I illustrate the concepts discussed earlier. I show how my emergence from embeddedness in the academy's constructs of individualism and competition was facilitated by my learning-in- relationship and by my growing capacity to engage multiple modes of knowing. I also show how my change "within" has contributed to structural change within the academy.

"In 1989, I encouraged four of my dissertation advisees to write a book. Three met with me to talk about this. I had great enthusiasm for what I thought was a workable and fair plan. I said: 'Since only Annie and Trudie are finished with their dissertations, one should take primary responsibility for the book. It makes sense for Annie to do it since she doesn't have a full-time job. This means that Annie will become the book's first author.'

"Silence fell across the room. Slowly, Trudie reached for a book on African-American women's emerging forms for scholarship. Retrospectively, I am struck by the grace with which Trudie and Gwendolyn tried to educate me about collaboration. I also remember my bafflement that the logic and practicality of my plan was being rebuffed.

"The idea of the book withered until a year later. During the next few weeks and many telephone conversations, a group of six persons was formed--the original four women whom I had tried to join together, a fifth whose work also fit the topic, and me. The group asked me to join them and, with some concern about the inequality inherent in the fact that I brought no data to the enterprise, I accepted their invitation.

"A major theme in the conversation was the idea of collaboration. I cannot remember how I came to change my ideas about the process that would create the book. I was impressed by the description of the authors' process in Women's Ways of Knowing. Perhaps my shift was simply pragmatic--all the women were now finished with their dissertations; there was less need for assigning differentiated roles and responsibilities. Before our first face-to-face meeting in July of 1990, we decided in a conference call to create a group name and, by using that name, signal to the world our commitment to equal collaboration.



"Our work together has changed me in ways too numerous to name. My relationship with these women as individuals and in our group teaches me that learning is not fully engaged if limited to cognitive processes and rational discourse.

"Most significant, we have learned from our joys and struggles about the rewards and demands of "commitment to equal collaboration." Collaboration--as the Group for Collaborative Inquiry is learning--poses a direct challenge to norms of individual competition and recognition as known in the culture of the academy. We have worked with uneven success to create a culture of collaboration that counters these norms. How easy it was for us to embrace equal collaboration as a principle; how difficult it has been to learn how to enact our intentions.

"I tell the story of how my learning-in-relationship and whole person learning enabled me to see the permeability and interconnectedness of my daily concrete reality. My relationship with the group gave me courage to take action: In June of 1991 I invited doctoral students who might be interested in learning more about collaboration to create a group project for their dissertation work. The format of this project posed an important challenge to the norms of the graduate institution. As the students' work has progressed, we have known the joy of seeing their projects create structural change in institutions and extraordinary growth in individuals. We also believe we have effected some modest change in the graduate institution itself."

#### CONCLUSION:

In A Parable the seekers pose the question: "How is it that humankind can escape from its misery and suffering?" Our data as seen in both Louise's and Elizabeth's stories suggest that learning-in-relationship and whole person learning when merged with a world view acknowledging reality as permeable and interconnected may paradoxically be both "the way" and "the end"--individual development and social action.

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## Prophecy from the Periphery: Alain Locke's Philosophy of Cultural Pluralism and Adult Education

Talmadge C. Guy

Alain Leroy Locke was born in 1886 during the post-reconstruction era and died a month before the *Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court* decision. An intellectual steeped in the realities of color in 20th century America, Locke possessed a range of interests that makes chronicling and interpreting his career in adult education challenging. Nevertheless, he is most commonly known for his leadership in the New Negro movement of the 1920s. However, he was a leading African American figure in the adult education movement of the 1930s. In 1947 he became president of the American Association for Adult Education. This paper fills in the gaps in knowledge regarding Alain Locke the adult educator. Particular attention is paid to Locke's philosophy of cultural pluralism and adult education.

Born and raised in Philadelphia to a middle-class family, he excelled in school, completed a degree in philosophy at Harvard, and was selected as the first African American Rhodes scholar. Following his European study he joined the faculty at Howard University as professor of English, philosophy, and pedagogy in 1911, beginning a forty year association with that institution where he initiated a number of educational reforms. In 1917 he a Ph. D. in philosophy at Harvard writing on value pluralism, his first statement related to cultural pluralism. In the 1920s he was a leader of the literary and artistic movement known as the Harlem Renaissance. In 1925 he published *The New Negro*, an anthology of writings by African American authors which catapulted him into national prominence. Other notable activities and contributions include: an annual publication of a review of the literature and scholarship on the Negro from 1928 until 1953; service as visiting professor at several universities including the Universities of Wisconsin and California, the City College of New York, the New School of Social Science in New York and as guest professor at the Harvard Academic Festival in Salzburg. He lectured in Latin America, Haiti and throughout the United States. He made regular visits to Africa, Paris and Rome. Furthermore, he wrote for or was associated with magazines and journals such as *The Crisis*, *Opportunity*, *Phylon* and served on the editorial boards for *The American Scholar*, *Progressive Education* and the Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion. He was a member of the American Philosophical Association, the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, the Académie des Science Coloniales, Paris.

### The Research Questions

Given Alain Locke's extensive involvement and influence in African American educational and cultural history, the question arises what contribution or influence did he have on the adult education movement in the U.S.? In pursuing this question, the study was guided by several concerns. First, in light of the recent interest in Locke in philosophical circles, what implications did his philosophy of cultural pluralism have for adult education? What historical examples might illustrate his conception of adult education guided by a philosophy of cultural pluralism. And finally, in what way might the historical understanding of the adult education movement be enriched through an analysis of Locke's views regarding African American adult education?

### Through a Glass Darkly: Locke's Philosophy of Cultural Pluralism

The idea of cultural pluralism, chiefly articulated by Horace Kallen, began to gain momentum as an idea that could guide education and social policy in the 1920s. (Kallen, 1915, 1924) The historical reality to which cultural pluralism as a system of ideas responded was the ethnic diversity related to mass immigration in the United States. (Itzkoff, 1969) Locke's version of cultural pluralism on the other hand emphasized the need for the recognition and valuing of the African American experience along with the complex mix of diverse ethnic cultures. Celebrating and valuing African American culture and identity, as represented in the New Negro movement, therefore, was just as important as celebrating European ethnic culture in American society. Race as well as ethnicity, therefore, had to be reflected in a philosophy of cultural pluralism in Locke's view. (Locke, 1942, 1944, 1945)

In so doing, Locke's primary intellectual aim was the debunking of the myth of European and white American cultural superiority. What Locke objected to was the arbitrary and subjective claims by some persons that their culture is inherently better than others. Locke saw that African American cultural heritage was an essential element of race progress and equality. Adult education, therefore, should concentrate on the preservation, transmission and creation of cultural expression. These ideas were essential tenets of Locke's adult education (Locke, 1923, 1925, 1934)

The main features of Locke's cultural pluralism may be summarized in the following way. Culture is not static but is ever changing. This dynamism means that people are creative agents as well as passive recipients of cultural values and norms. Values are specific to socio-cultural contexts and are relative from time and place to time and place. The relativity and specificity of cultural values has as much to do with non-rational, emotional factors of life as it does with cognitive, pragmatic factors. As a matter of fact, these non-cognitive factors are prior to cognitive processes in valuation. Extreme or radical relativism, such as that of classical cultural anthropology, i.e., that there is no inherent superiority of one culture over another and there is no way to translate meanings across cultures, is an inadequate way to conceptualize intercultural communication and understanding. Translation of meanings and values across cultures is possible but must take into account what Locke calls the empirical study of cultural cognates or value equivalents which involves holistic intercultural understanding. How do these ideas about cultural pluralism bear on Locke's conception of adult education?

### **The Adult Education Movement and "Negro" Adult Education**

Prior to the 1920s, most African Americans lived in the South. During the second and third decades of the century, hundreds of thousands of African Americans moved to the North to take advantage of economic opportunities. As a consequence, issues relating to African American education had been largely thought to be a regional issue confined to the South. However, this began to change during the 1920s when African American education emerged as an issue of national scope. (Lagemann, p. 127; Wintz, p. 13) Leaders of the Carnegie Corporation began to deliberate how the incipient adult education movement might address adult education among African Americans. The real issue was whether African Americans would participate in planned adult education programs and, if so, what kind?

By 1930, Morse Cartwright, executive director of the American Association of Adult Education, Franklin Hopper of the New York public library and chair of the Association's committee on Negro education, and others began to discuss the possibility of conducting a project aimed at the African American community. (Cartwright, p. 380) What were to become known as the Harlem and Atlanta experiments in Negro adult education were launched in 1931 and 1932. Locke was hired as a consultant to monitor and evaluate the projects. As such, Locke played a major role in shaping the direction and outcome of the projects. With grants from the Carnegie Corporation and the Rosenwald fund, the AAAE administered the projects funded at a level of \$15,000. (Cartwright, 352) The projects ran for three years through the end of 1934. Although similar in structure and purpose the two projects operated independently.

Harlem and Atlanta were cosmopolitan communities. Located in different regions with very different histories, they also posed special problems in implementing adult education for African Americans. It was thought, therefore, that a broad range of adult educational activities addressing cultural, practical, informational, social and political issues was needed to provide to as broad a segment of the community as possible. In Harlem, community participation was solicited via a representative community advisory group. This group helped the planners establish policies and lay plans for a program of adult education. In particular, Locke advised that the program should emphasize cultural and social issues of interest to the community. A broad conception of adult education based on the social and cultural interests of the community was seen as a critical factor in the success of the projects. The resulting program was based on the idea that the African Americans community could benefit from and would become involved in adult education that was relevant to their concerns by emphasizing matters of racial interest. In Harlem, topical areas included social education, economic

problems and theory, artistic expression and community solidarity. Once decided, designated library staff did the work of developing and delivering programs. Between 1931 and 1933, total attendance at all activities, excluding the forums, totaled more than five thousand persons. In Atlanta, special efforts were made to link with local adult education efforts as well as to access the resources of Atlanta University. (E. Rose, p 55)

Locke's evaluations of the project are illuminating. As if to quiet any doubts about the need for a program of adult education among African Americans, he noted, "... the decided success of the work at both the centers ... has demonstrated unmistakably (*sic*) the need for and desirability of special programs in adult education for Negro groups both in Northern and Southern communities." (Locke, 1934a, p. 1) Beyond demonstrating the need for a program of African American adult education, Locke asserted that such projects should be seen as part of a larger program of adult education for the entire community. He added: Such programs should ultimately be extended to every considerable Negro community in the country, but should always be regarded as supplemental to a general program and to whatever general community plan exists in the locality and should aim ultimately at being incorporated in such a program under local municipal or community support.

#### **Ideological Conflict: the Corporation's Perspective and Locke's Cultural Pluralism for African American Education**

The inclusion of African American adult education within a broader framework of community adult education was what the Harlem and Atlanta experiments represented. But how could a specialized program for African Americans be seen as part and parcel of a more generalized program for the larger white community? After all, this was an era when segregated educational facilities, even in Northern cities, were commonplace. Would not this lead to a situation in which whites would see African American adult education as a separate enterprise, unrelated to their concerns and problems? And, therefore, would not whites consider such programs probably inferior?

In Locke's view, the answer lay in the need to overcome the ill effects of racial bigotry and segregation. African American education, conceived as a separate function of society, had a crippling effect on the African American community. Locke agreed with Du Bois that a separate education for African Americans was, in practice, an inferior education. Locke, 1934b) While he did not make it altogether clear in his evaluation reports, it may be reasonably inferred that Locke viewed African American adult education as a broadly-based program in which whites as well as African Americans could benefit from increased knowledge about African American culture. He certainly emphasized the importance of cultural and social education which he saw as a way of promoting tolerance among racial and ethnic groups.

By advocating an expanded program of African American adult education in conjunction with a broader community education, Locke was set the stage for understanding African American adult education from the perspective of cultural pluralism. The Harlem and Atlanta programs were important not only for meeting the community education needs among the residents of Harlem and Atlanta, but also for creating the model upon which similar programs should be developed. These new programs would integrate African American education with other groups so that the groundwork would be laid for intercultural exchange.

As the end of the Corporation's commitment to funding to the projects approached, Locke wrote a letter to Morse Cartwright that recommended three things: 1) that funding for support of the Harlem and Atlanta projects be continued; 2) that a national position comparable to the AAAE executive director be established to foster the development of a national program of African American adult education; and 3) that a series of source books be prepared and published for use of those programs. (Jones, 1934) Of the second point, Locke wrote:



There is need for a campaign promoting more widespread interest in adult education projects for Negro groups and communities, utilizing the experience and results of the three year experimental program as conducted to date in Harlem and Atlanta. This work should be in the charge of a person of high scholastic equipment, a young Negro man or woman, with sound experience in executive work of the educational as well as the social work type. The appointment of such a person to organize and take charge of such a campaign beginning January 1, 1935 is ... recommended. (1934)

This proposal was rejected by Cartwright and Keppel. Initially sympathetic to the issue of adult education among African Americans, Cartwright conveyed Keppel's official response that promotional work was beyond the policy parameters adopted by the AAAE's executive board. It should be noted furthermore, Locke's and Jones's recommendation came at a time when the Corporation was planning to curtail its funding of field service projects. (A. Rose, 1989, p. 503) Despite the apparent good reception of the program, the Harlem and Atlanta projects were extended on a temporary grant for one more year, through 1935. No funding was provided for the promotional work. However, Locke's proposal for the series was funded and eventually resulted in the publication of the "Bronze Booklets".

But, the issue was deeper than one of timing or Keppel's skepticism. Ideological differences made the proposal impossible for the AAAE and the Corporation to support. Locke had argued for a program of adult education that would emphasize the needs and interests of African Americans and by implication and extension other cultural and ethnic groups. The cultural interchange and learning that he hoped for was part of a broad-based conception of education in which a adult learners would learn their own culture and its importance in American life. The leaders of the Corporation, however, were committed to a liberal and elitist notion of culture. (Lagemann, p. 120) Members of the Corporation board hoped that adult education would aid in educating leaders to set standards of public taste. By exposing the general public to the "best which has been thought and said in the world", the Corporation could help sustain social stability and common values. (Lagemann) Consequently, the recommendation made by Locke and supported by other African American leaders, met with cool reception. While, Cartwright and Keppel rejected the establishment of a larger program of African American adult education, they agreed to support the proposal that special materials for study in African American adult education be prepared and published for use by adult education groups.

This project became known as the "Bronze Booklets". The latter recommendation eventuated in the establishment of the Associates in Negro Folk Education (ANFE), a bi-racial organization committed to African American adult education. Its primary accomplishment was the publication of a series of materials related to cultural, social, and economic issues of the African American community. These became known as the "Bronze Booklets". When AAAE funding support ended for the Harlem and Atlanta projects, the ANFE represented the next concrete project in African American adult education for the Corporation and the AAAE.

However, the ANFE was essentially an organization devoted to the publication of the Bronze Booklets and never achieved a measure of autonomy and direction that reflected the needs of the African American community. This was due perhaps to the composition of the committee, bi-racial and persons from various regions and levels of professional activity. Lacking any direct constituency, ANFE languished and finally went out of existence in 1945. Locke's efforts to generate interest and enthusiasm for a program of cultural mass adult education waned. In his later years, in a pensive but disillusioned mood, Locke regretted the direction that the New Negro movement had taken with its emphasis upon culture.

### Conclusion

So we can be said about Alain Locke and adult education? Clearly, Locke labored on the periphery of the movement of adult education in the 1920s through the 1940s. By the mid 1930s, at the height of the African American program of adult education, the Carnegie Corporation was already

retreating from its institutional support of adult education. In this time of retrenchment, Locke asserted the importance of African American adult education. Although his proposal for an expanded experimental adult education programming met with opposition, the resulting Bronze Booklets series was a concrete product of the efforts in African American adult education. Despite Locke's support for further initiatives in African American adult education, the reception of these proposals within the AAAE and the Corporation was lukewarm at best. In particular, Locke's ideas about mass adult education based on cultural pluralism could not have received support. Nevertheless, it is illuminating to examine the ways in which the conflict played out.

Even though he was elected to the AAAE executive board in 1935, the Corporation had already begun to anticipate its withdrawal from the adult education movement. Locke's closer association with the AAAE came at a time when its very future was being threatened. Despite his continued affiliation with the AAAE throughout most of the 1940s, Locke still was not closely involved with the direction or policy-making of the Association. Even as president, Locke's role was largely figurative, a recognition of years of service. Ideologically, and philosophically, Locke was outside the mainstream of Corporation and AAAE thinking relative to adult education. For these reasons, his significance for adult education history lay largely in that he was in the periphery of the movement. By "periphery" I wish to convey that Locke was indeed away from the center of things but equally importantly that being on the periphery also meant he perhaps was on the cutting edge. In terms of what he advocated, Locke had much to say that was and is of continuing importance. That he has been little recognized for this is a reflection not of his marginality, i.e., missing the mark or the center, but of his status as not being included by the dominant historical perspective in adult education in the United States. His emphasis upon the racially-based needs of African Americans within the context of a reformed general program of adult education was unique and reflected his perspective as an African American. Nevertheless, his leadership lacked a practical impact and therefore, opportunities for expanded African American adult education waned at a time when opportunities presented themselves for its expansion. Prophetic in the sense that he previewed educational reforms that were to occur twenty-five later, Locke nevertheless can be seen as being in, but not completely of, the American adult education movement.

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## **"Lugenia Burns Hope and The Neighborhood Union: Culturally Grounded Community-Based Programming in the Early Twentieth Century"**

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**Abstract:** This study extends the conceptual framework of traditional community-based programming models to include a culturally grounded community-based programming model developed during the early twentieth century by Lugenia Burns Hope and the Neighborhood Union (1908).

### **Introduction**

African American female adult educators emerged during the early twentieth century in response to social problems of racism, substandard housing, healthcare and inadequate education for African Americans (Ross-Gordon and Gyant, 1993). Some of these women included: Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona, Florida; Margaret Murray Washington, founder of The Women's Industrial Club, in Tuskegee Alabama; Mary Church Terrell, African American civil rights activist, lecturer and author, and Lugenia Burns Hope who is the focus of this research. This study will examine Lugenia Burns Hope and her work as founder of the Neighborhood Union (1908), one of the first culturally grounded organizations developed by African American women in the city of Atlanta, Georgia to address the educational, medical, social, and recreational needs of African American Atlantans (Rouse, 1989). This study will analyze the structure and goals of the Neighborhood Union as one example of culturally grounded adult education and community building during the early 20th century.

### **Theoretical Model of Community-Based Programming**

Although there have been various models of community-based programming (Tyler, 1971, Knowles, 1970, Dean and Dowling, 1987), Boone (1985) provides a theoretical model of programming for adult education that includes four macro concepts of planned change, planning, design and implementation, and evaluation and accountability. The primary objective of this programming model is planned behavior change in the adult learner groups and systems through the collaboration of adult education leaders and learners. This model is proactive and futuristic linking the adult education organization with learners and learner groups, and is based on the notion that the framework is logical and rational for directing and giving meaning to the efforts of adult educators. Also, this framework examines programming from the sociocultural context in which change is proposed (Boone, 1985).

Based on progressivism, behaviorist, humanistic and radical philosophies, Boone (1985) utilizes a "scientific approach to programming" viewing programming as rational, logical and predictable to understanding the needs of humans and solving problems. Such a perspective is characteristic of the Eurocentric cultural tradition of knowledge acquisition which "democratizes" equality, thus the same universal principles and the same explanations are applied equally to all people (Sampson, 1978). In this sense, equality is viewed as synonymous with sameness or the normative (Sampson, 1978, Taylor and Chatters, 1989). Such assumptions often hide cultural or group experiences that may be at the heart of understanding what the learners and learner groups need (Boykin, 1991).



From this perspective viable programming activities are viewed as almost exclusively occurring in a formal organization, i.e., colleges, universities, and social welfare agencies (Dean and Dowling, 1987). For example, Boone (1985) stated:

"while one may visualize adult education programming as occurring outside a formal organization, for the most part this simply is not the case...almost **always** some formal organizational setting is the context for programming efforts." (p. 208).

Such views prevent the recognition of the informal community-based programming activities created by women and minorities in their communities (Harris, 1993).

### **Conceptual Framework/Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the viability of the Neighborhood Union as a antecedent to traditional community-based programming models. An Africentric perspective underlies the foundation of this study. This perspective unlike the Eurocentric perspective, does not view other racial or ethnic groups as being inferior. This perspective is grounded in seven basic values of African society: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. The purpose of these values are to develop human values, selfethnic identity, independence, and pride (Asante, 1988, Colin, 1992). Colin (1992) stated that culturally grounded community-based programs are "activities that are reflective of the sociocultural realities and life experiences that are indigenous to a group which are designed and implemented by individuals or organizations that have their roots in the community" (p.8). These principles provide the basis of this examination of the culturally grounded programming activities of Lugenia Burns Hope and the Neighborhood Union. Historical inquiry was utilized as the primary research methodology in this study and both primary and secondary sources were analyzed such as the Neighborhood Union Manuscript Collections, Atlanta University Center, Robert Woodruff Library and the biography Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer (Barazun and Graff, 1985).

### **Findings**

#### ***Background***

Lugenia Burns was born in 1871 in St. Louis, Missouri and the family relocated to Chicago, Illinois during the pre-migration period of the late nineteenth century. Lugenia Burns attended high school during this time from 1890-1893. However, her schooling ended when she had to work to support the family. Lugenia Burns assumed the role of Mrs. Wayne's personal secretary. Mrs. Wayne was the Director of Silver Cross Club, a charitable Chicago organization that worked with the settlement house, Hull House and its founder, Jane Addams. Lugenia Burns credited this early involvement in settlement work as setting the foundation for her own ideas of community organizing (Rouse, 1989, Salem, 1990).

Lugenia Burns married John Hope in 1897 in Nashville, Tennessee and the couple moved to Atlanta, Georgia in 1898 where John Hope became a professor at Atlanta Baptist College (renamed Morehouse College in 1913). Lugenia Burns Hope became involved with the committee on the welfare of the Negro child which focused on child-care provisions for African American mothers in the neighborhood areas of the campus. This early community work by Lugenia Burns Hope centered on improving the living conditions and future opportunities for children in the neighborhood by educating the adults. In 1906, John Hope became president of Atlanta Baptist College, extending Lugenia Burns Hope's means for continuing her community work (Rouse, 1989, 1993).

### ***The Neighborhood Union***

The idea for the Neighborhood Union was the result of the death of a woman in the surrounding neighborhood of the Atlanta Baptist College campus. Lugenia Burns Hope felt the woman died because of the absence of a "neighborly feeling" in the community (Frazier, 1923, Rouse, 1989, 1993). As a result, on July 8, 1908, Lugenia Burns Hope called a meeting of the faculty wives (all members of the immediate community) to discuss the idea of settlement work within their community. The idea was accepted by the women and the "Neighborhood Union (NU)" was developed. The motto, "Thy Neighbor as Thyself" was adopted and the goals of the NU were to develop a sense of helpfulness among neighbors in the community as well as the moral, social, intellectual, and religious uplift of the African American community (Neighborhood Union Papers, 1908, 1909, 1910).

In order to assess the specific needs of community residents, all the members of the NU conducted house-to-house surveys, to introduce the organizational idea to the community and to talk individually with residents. From these initial conversations and observations, NU members learned that the streets needed to be paved, and there was inadequate living, sewage and water facilities. Also, residents indicated they needed healthcare, childcare and recreational services. As a result, Mrs. Hope and NU members decided that in order to find out the specific needs of residents and address them, the Neighborhood Union needed to organize neighborhoods in each section, "where the people could gather for meetings, clubs and classes and feel that they were their own." The NU was organized to include four departments: healthcare, moral, educational and literacy, and musical and art departments. Funding was obtained from NU dues, fundraising activities as well as securing support and donations from local businesses. Under the leadership of Lugenia Burns Hope, this vision would be extended to include the whole city of Atlanta (Neighborhood Union Papers, 1915).

The culturally grounded structure Lugenia Burns Hope and the Neighborhood Union utilized is illustrated in Figure 1.

### **Figure 1 NEIGHBORHOOD UNION STRUCTURE**

#### **CITY ZONES - NEIGHBORHOODS - DISTRICTS**

#### **(DISTRICT LEADERS, DIRECTORS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ZONE CHAIRMANS, BOARD OF MANAGERS)**

The city zones were under the direction of a chairperson from the immediate neighborhood. These zones were further divided into neighborhoods, and the neighborhoods into districts. Each district was supervised by a neighborhood president. The zone, district and neighborhood presidents assisted the NU in organizing the individual neighborhoods, preserving records, and conducting face-to-face surveys. These individuals worked collaboratively with the board of district directors and the board of managers (Neighborhood Union, 1908).

The district leaders were endorsed by the majority of families and were responsible for recording families economic and social status. The directors collaborated with the district leaders, and directed the work of the neighborhoods with neighborhood presidents and community workers. The board of directors, who were elected by neighborhood presidents, governed the directors and the zone chairmans, who organized the neighborhoods, received

reports, and evaluations of the work. The board of managers was comprised of the neighborhood presidents, zone chairmen and department heads. These managers organized and initiated the overall neighborhood activities (Neighborhood Union, 1908).

This informal organizational structure involved over 500 neighborhood residents, Neighborhood Union members, college students and community volunteers. Through this culturally grounded structure, the Neighborhood Union provided a variety of community activities for adults and children. These activities included: kindergarten and daycare centers; a settlement house that provided reading rooms; literary clubs; childrearing classes; literacy education; home healthcare training for the elderly, academic and vocational instruction, and temporary shelter for homeless families (Neighborhood Union Papers, 1915).

### **Culturally Grounded Community-Based Programming**

This examination of Lugenia Burns Hope and her leadership in the Neighborhood Union is an example of culturally grounded community-based programming for several reasons. One, Mrs. Hope utilized a Africentric community development model of urban reform based on hands-on work directly within the community (Collins, 1993). Also, Lugenia Burns Hope utilized strategies that required high involvement with community leaders and residents not only to build connectedness, but a sense of community uplift and ethnic pride (Rouse, 1989). Mrs. Hope as a resident within the community, developed close relationships with the women in the Neighborhood Union and neighborhood residents. These relationships made them feel intimately connected to the organization. Community residents developed, planned, implemented and evaluated the services they received. This type of community development in the African American community traditionally has focused on activities that empower adults in their own learning (Harris, 1993).

What makes this culturally grounded community-based programming model significant is the continuous assessments of residents' needs by the residents themselves and their subsequent involvement in directing the changes they identified. Through the leadership of Lugenia Burns Hope and the Neighborhood Union, African American Atlantans were empowered through community investigation. Although referred to as the Neighborhood Union, the unit was the **neighborhood** where the work was focused and completed (Frazier, 1923). The Neighborhood Union ministered to the needs of people by utilizing the strengths of the people themselves.

Community-based programs operate on the assumptions that a given community whether rural or urban, has the potential to solve many of its own problems by relying on its own resources and mobilizing community action for problem resolutions (Cunningham and Hamilton, 1991). Such elements were a key part of the culturally grounded community-based programming of Lugenia Burns Hope and the Neighborhood Union which makes it one viable antecedent to traditional models of community-based programming.

### **Conclusion**

In 1933, the Neighborhood Union celebrated its 25th anniversary. Mrs. Hope was honored for 25 years of social service to Atlanta. Although she relinquished the leadership role, the organization continued to exist until 1970. Lugenia Burns Hope utilized her fearless stand for justice to promote African American needs. Like many of the women in the southern leadership network, who were educated and middle-class women, Mrs. Hope through the Neighborhood Union provided adults and children in Atlanta services and

programs important to their community (Rouse, 1993). Lugenia Burns Hope, the women volunteers, and residents of the neighborhoods, saw their mission as providing the young with alternatives and the adults with educational information (Rouse, 1989). The success of this culturally grounded program is evidenced by the national and international replication of this model through the National Urban League (Salem, 1990).

The National Urban League emerged as one of the principle agencies handling the employment, housing, health, recreational and adapted concerns and problems of African Americans in urban cities during the turn of the century. To become national in its' program, the National Urban League relied on the racial uplift of many African American women and the social programs they developed. The Neighborhood Union model of Zone-Neighborhood-District cooperation and collaboration was used as the unit plan in the National Urban Leagues' activities in cities across the United States such as Tallahassee, Florida; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Newark, New Jersey and Norfolk, Virginia (Salem, 1990).

Members of the southern leadership network of African American women saw themselves as role models, and their as task teaching through the oral tradition (Rouse, 1989). Lugenia Burns Hope is just one of many African American women who spent their lives uplifting the African American race. The story of Lugenia Burns Hope is illustrative of how the collective activities of African American women have been affected by the sociocultural history of African American lives (Rouse, 1989). Mrs. Hope highlighted the social, economic and environmental inequities of American society that were often endured by African Americans, and gradually produced changes through the culturally grounded community-based program, the Neighborhood Union (Dickson, 1990).

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## **Critical Rationality from a Cross-Cultural Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the impacts of cultural transition on the adult cognitive process of critical rationality. It presents ethnographic findings from case studies of Asian immigrants who successfully negotiate the cultural transition to work positions of supervisory responsibility. A series of findings--some culture-specific, some broader--are reported. Finally, a critique of the study's conception of the presumed universality of critical rationality is offered from a postmodernist, cross-cultural perspective, suggesting that prevailing conceptions of critical rationality may be culturally bound, thus requiring re-examination.

This paper is presented in two parts: the first reports on a study of critical rationality among Chinese immigrant adults in the United States; the second reflects on the underlying conceptual framework of the study, calling into question the notion of critical rationality employed in the study as an unexamined, arguably Eurocentric thought form that needs to be recast in the context of a multicultural society.

### **I. Ethnographic Study of Problem-Solving/Critical Rationality Strategies of Asian Immigrant Adults in the United States**

#### **A. Purpose, Theoretical Framework, and Method**

This study investigated thinking processes employed by Chinese immigrants in San Francisco, California in addressing problems in their personal and work lives. It explored the extent to which the experience of cultural transition contributes to a process of questioning underlying norms, a process often cited as a key element of the cognitive process of critical rationality. The study relied on Habermas' (1973, 1984) notion that this event of calling into question the validity of existing norms is an important element in the manifestation of a critical consciousness. To some extent, then, this study presumed (unreflectively at the time) that the construct of critical rationality as articulated by powerful Western social and educational theorists was a universal thought form (Brookfield, 1989; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1991; McLaren, 1989; Mezirow, 1990, 1991).

Ethnographic research methods were employed to construct case studies of five Chinese newcomers over a one-year period. After extensive bilingual interviews and discussions with each of the five informants (all tape-recorded) in a variety of contexts, they were brought together for a videotaped bilingual focus group in which they analyzed common case studies and problem situations. All data collection processes were guided by open-ended interview protocols, and discourse shifted freely between English and Chinese.

#### **B. Findings**

##### **•Pragmatic Clarity**

Four findings emerged, the first of which may be characterized as "pragmatic clarity." This form of thought focuses on the "real" world directly evident to the senses and to direct social experience. Most participants, for example, demonstrated through their use of language (both English and Chinese) a persistent concern with what is "real" and readily discernible to the senses. One who employs pragmatic clarity seeks to direct human effort carefully and efficiently towards ends that are judged to be reasonably attainable. This form of rationality addresses problems that are immediately within the scope of influence of the individual; it often ignores those that are not. Thus thinking in this fashion does not seem seriously to consider the existence or importance of a supernatural world, nor does it seem to place value on considering other kinds of Western moral abstractions such as "law" or "science" unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such constructs

have applications whose results are directly useful and practical. Participants also showed little interest in hypothesizing in a counterfactual way, finding it strange to respond to questions that took the form, "What if...?" Such hypothetical thinking, it appeared, was not viewed as "useful" or "practical." In making strong points and in closing arguments they would frequently say, "You can see it," or "I have seen it," to emphasize a point.

#### • *Group-Centered Thinking*

The second finding is hardly new; rather, it reflects countless claims from studies of Japanese, Chinese, and many other Northeast and Southeast Asian societies and cultures. This finding posits a strand of thinking that centers thought on the notion of a collectivity of humans. This form of thought takes the group, rather than the individual, as the first and most basic unit of consideration when needs, goals, or other categories of human action are consciously assessed. Thus the complex of European and European-American constructs such as the individual, individualism, and self-actualization, while marginally present, do not seem to be central to this group-oriented way of thinking. Thus, in this form of thinking, the consideration of the collectivity--whether the clan, family, work group, or school group--takes a prominent, even predominant role. To think of the individual as the primary focus can at times be viewed from this perspective as selfish. It is difficult--though extraordinarily important--for those centered in European and European-American perspectives to grasp what it means to think in a way that consistently takes the group rather than the individual as the primary unit of consideration.

#### • *The Role of Time*

A third finding suggests general agreement among participants that time played a different role in the thinking of Chinese in contrast to European-Americans. A general pattern of thought was identified which displayed a multigenerational sense of historical perspective. This may have to do with the phenomenon of a real and close identification of oneself with both the preceding and succeeding generations of one's family. This identification is embodied in the sense of strong obligation on the one hand to provide for offspring and their successors, and the equally important need on the other hand to show gratitude and provide for one's parents, and to live and act in a way that will reflect credit on one's predecessors. This form of thinking can have important impacts on problem-solving and practical action in the world by postponing immediate gratification, engaging in long-term planning, and shifting one's focus from immediate problems to ultimate goals that may be years, decades, even generations into the future.

#### • *Cultural Transition and Questioning Norms*

A key element of this study, as noted earlier, was its reliance on Habermas' (1973, 1984) notion that the event of calling into question the validity of existing norms is an important--and advanced--stage in the development of critical rationality. Further, the study explored whether the very experience of moving from one cultural context to another would give rise to such a questioning capacity. There appears to be the wide presumption in the consideration of intercultural interaction that cross-cultural living, work, or travel necessarily "broadens" one. However, from the ethnographic evidence presented by the participants in the study, all of whom were immigrants motivated by economic or political conditions, this does not appear to be the case. Some "thought critically," some did not. The event of moving from one culture to another, while it may aid in the development of a questioning frame of mind, appears to require additionally a prior level of critical experience on the part of the immigrant through questioning the previous norms of the home culture prior to entry in the new culture. Thus, crossing from one cultural context to another did not seem in this study of itself to lead to serious reflection or questioning of prevailing norms, but the prior experience of critical reflection in the home culture appeared to carry over to help build a similar capacity in the new culture.

## II. Reflections from a Cross-Cultural Perspective on the Notion of Critical Rationality as "the" Higher Order Thinking Skill

The second section of this paper reflects on whether an important aspect of the theoretical framework of the study--the presumption of the universality of the thought form called critical rationality--may have been flawed.

### A. Critical Rationality: Universal and "Context-Free" or Sociohistorically Contexted?

For about the last decade in educational discourse in the United States, there has been considerable discussion of a cognitive construct variously termed "critical thinking," "higher order thinking skills," "critical rationality," or the "teaching of thinking skills." There are, to be sure, distinctions in the use of these terms by different researchers, but they also have things in common. Four strands may be identified in the recent literature on "critical thinking" (Siegel, 1988):

- *The "Pure Skills" Conception (Robert Ennis)*

A person is a critical thinker if one has the skills, abilities, or proficiencies necessary for the correct assessing of statements. A curriculum involves imparting these skills. This conception speaks of the possession of these skills, but not of their use.

- *The "Strong Sense" (Richard Paul)*

This conception would go beyond the teaching of technical skills of logical argumentation to their application, in order to grasp the world views of others, understand one's own, and to engage a dialogue between the two.

- *The "Context Bound" Conception (John McPeck)*

This view suggests that critical thinking is always thinking about something, and that there may not be as many transferable deep structures among critical thinking about different subject contexts as the two preceding theorists claim.

- *Critical Consciousness for Transformation (Paulo Freire, Jack Mezirow, Stephen Brookfield, Henry Giroux)*

This view introduces the notion of social and political context to the three preceding interpretations of critical thinking/rationality. Adherents of this view, particularly Freire (1970) emphasize the development by learners of problem-solving strategies that engage learners in problems in the context of their lives, in order to develop the critical consciousness that will enable movement to social action.

All four of these strands of critical thinking/rationality seem to share at least three key related thought structures that have to do with "critical thinking." These structures, which have strong European cultural and philosophical roots, are often said to proceed in the following linear fashion:

- (1) One suspends hypothetically, in counterfactual fashion, a current set of phenomena (reasoning in the form of, "what if...").
- (2) One identifies assumptions, reasons, causes, and norms, employing the rules of Western logic.
- (3) One then calls these assumptions, reasons, causes, and norms into question, critiquing their basis and possible implications, in a formalized and often abstract way that again requires the application of the rules of Western logic.

Notwithstanding the undoubted value of critical thinking in many contexts, it seems important to ask in the midst of its valorization: To what extent is critical rationality being cast as a cultural universal? Is this thought form, however defined, something that all humans from all cultures universally exercise? Do all the learners come to class with the same kinds of cultural capital with respect to the importance or value of this construct? Do people from diverse cultural, social, and gender positions desire to or feel comfortable performing "critical thinking" as above defined? Must one indeed "think critically" in to be able to think at "higher order" levels? Is critical thinking being portrayed as something that is free from the social, cultural, and historical context of its own development?



It seems important that we at least consider stipulating that critical thinking and critical rationality are powerful, dominant thought forms in contemporary European and European-American educational and intellectual discourse, which while possibly not universal, must be taught and learned for success in many contemporary European-American contexts. In either case, further work is needed, ironically perhaps, to critically examine the critical thinking construct in all its forms, particularly from the postmodernist perspectives of culture, diversity, gender, domination, and subordination.

In an argument with postmodernists Lyotard (1984) and Foucault (1972), Habermas (1990) refuses to reject critical rationality and its basis in modernity, arguing that we need instead to reexamine "the philosophical discourse of modernity" without leaving its overarching structural framework. However, key elements of Habermas' constructs of critical rationality can be called into question from the perspective of subordinated or marginalized cultures and groups. As one feminist writer puts it,

"How *can* we argue for "rational discourse", with outcomes based on the "better argument" and inclusive "of all those competent to speak," when so many power imbalances operate to regulate people's ability to argue in accordance with this Enlightenment-defined concept of rationality. Is empowerment through social discourse only for those who are judged competent within this definition of rationality? What of the new immigrant with very little English — are her/his arguments less "rational" because they are less articulate; what of the mentally disabled — are their views to be discounted entirely because they can not present them in a "rational" way; what of those who may be inexperienced but, nevertheless, deeply affected by the outcome of a discourse — are their arguments less "rational" because they are less informed — and what of women?" (Trewartha, 1993).

Elizabeth Ellsworth further argues, "Rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other, which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic Others" (1989).

McLaren describes "discursive practices" as "rules by which discourses are formed, rules that govern what can be said and what must remain unsaid, who can speak with authority and who must listen" (1990). He argues that these types of "rules" lead to the embodiment of power relations in discourse and that, "A critical discourse is also self-critical and deconstructs dominant discourses the moment they are ready to achieve hegemony" (1990). To postulate that rational discourse is somehow devoid of rules and has the ability to "deconstruct dominant discourses" is questionable. Being "rational" has achieved hegemony by the very fact that it is a term, used by the dominant center in our society, to invalidate the arguments of those who are marginalized as "irrational." Critical theorists have themselves constructed rules for discourse based on the concept of rationality. Arguing that critical pedagogy "... should be cautious of reiterating the dangerous memory of a liberal idealism which centers on the primacy of male consciousness," Carmen Luke goes on to note, "The standpoint from which critical pedagogy speaks reveals an inurement to those discourses which laid the foundation for innumerable discursive constructions of public 'man' in political society, all of which militated against women, racial differences and underclasses" (1992). While critical theorists criticize the modern project of rationality and reason their work remains "... theoretically entrenched in gender- and color-blind patriarchal liberalism" (Luke, 1992: 49).

Similar questions can be raised from cross-cultural perspectives as reported in the educational experiences of learners from marginalized cultures. There are anecdotal reports, for example, of the persistent failure of many learners from marginalized cultures to grasp in basic university-level writing classes the "critical" frame of mind desired by instructors in essays, a turn of mind that is arguably an element of "critical thinking." Numerous Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and African American learners in such writing classes report perplexity at being asked to "argue with" a specific text or author. It does not seem to make sense to them to be asked to do this. Is not the purpose of education, they ask, to master a specific body of knowledge? Why must they find fault with a text before they have understood it. It might be argued anecdotally, in fact, that the bias of writing courses in this direction has perpetrated a channeling of non-European-American (particularly Asian) learners away from academic disciplines which require the

use of language in this "critical" way into disciplines (like hard science) where cognitive structures appear more straightforward.

In a related argument, cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner (1989) reports from an investigation into arts education in China what he calls a "mimetic" form of teaching in learning, which he contrasts with a European and European-American educational philosophy. In this mimetic form, a teacher models a skill using a set and consistent form, and the learner replicates the form precisely in unvarying, repetitive sequence. Putting aside his initial culture shock and pedagogical horror at the perceived "rigidity" of this form, Gardner admits that this Confucian-derived, mimetic teaching/learning approach secures impressive results. Similar accounts of diverse, culturally- and historically-situated teaching and learning forms have been or must be investigated within Asian, African, Buddhist, Islamic/Koranic, Meso American, and other learning traditions.

There is little evidence in most of the world's recognized multicultural educational traditions of this "critical" turn of mind that has been so much valued in recent years in North American education. It seems apparent, then, that we need to look quite a bit harder at this so-far-unexamined, almost universally-embraced notion called critical rationality or critical thinking--not so much to reject it as to better understand it so as to enable *all* learners to make intelligent choices about its context and possible applications.

## **B. Rethinking and Teaching "Higher Order" Thinking in a Multicultural Society**

From the foregoing discussion, the following preliminary prescriptions for educational practice may be offered with respect to teaching "critical thinking" or teaching about it in multicultural contexts:

1. We must be clear about the Eurocentric origins of the concept of critical thinking. We need to understand it as having emerged from a specific set of cultural and historical conditions. We must situate it in our minds as one of numerous possible "higher order" thought forms. To avoid doing this is to fall prey to the fallacy of cultural invisibility, wherein members of the dominant culture in a multicultural society fail to recognize that "they have a culture too," and instead problematize the marginalized others without also problematizing the dominant cultural center.
2. We need to make a clear case to learners for the importance of this thought process. We need to describe the role and power of this thought form in such key operations as the scientific method.
3. We need to recognize and admit the condition of cultural domination in the United States and the part that unquestioned valorizing of dominant cultural thought forms such as critical rationality have played in maintaining conditions of marginalization and inequality for people of color and women.
4. We need to make *all* the rules of critical rationality--stated and unstated--transparent at the conscious level so that they may be taught and learned by learners from all cultures, who may then choose their use of these thought forms, as is done through "code switching" when speakers of different languages or language varieties choose when and how to "shift linguistic gears."
5. We need to uncover, discuss, validate, and begin to teach and learn about diverse forms of complex, higher-order thinking that emerge from different cultures--from Asia, Africa, and the New World--both to legitimize the thinking processes of members of subordinate cultures, as well as to enhance the quality and possibilities of developing a multiplicity of thinking skills for all learners from diverse cultures, whether dominant and subordinate.
6. We need to teach from a cross-cultural perspective that emphasizes induction and context. The best teaching about the kind of cultural complexity that we are seeking to address must proceed as does research about cultures: through the uncovering and inductive analysis of cases, texts, life histories, performances, and other cultural forms wherein important meanings are embedded. Top-down, deductive, rule-like iterations are not likely to make much headway in uncovering the powerful, but sometimes deeply buried cognitive structures that we need to address.

## Conclusion

If we are to advance the notion of education in a multicultural society we must come to terms with the complex dimensions of cultural domination and marginalization. To date much of the critique of Eurocentric cultural domination in education has stopped at the level of "head-counting" (how many authors of which color are included in which curriculum). What is offered here is a suggestion to take the analysis a bit deeper, to uncover important cognitive structures that need to be understood, reframed, unlearned, or relearned.

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## HETEROSEXIST DISCOURSE IN ADULT EDUCATION: A GAY/LESBIAN CRITIQUE

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### Abstract

Heterosexism is a widely-shared system that assumes heterosexuality is the only life option. The result is the domination of members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual communities. Gay resistance discourse exposes this hegemony and is an agent for social change. Adult education plays roles in both heterosexist- and gay-discourses in at least two significant ways. Mainstream adult education reproduces heterocentric social relations and beliefs; gay discourse is silenced and forgotten. However, numerous sites of popular adult education promote gay and lesbian liberation.

### The Problem and Background

Heterosexism is the repressive social system of mandatory or compulsory heterosexuality. It is encoded in the language, thoughts, assumptions and symbols of the dominant society. This discourse is subtle discrimination of lesbians, gay males, and bisexual, transsexual, and transgendered persons through neglect, omission or distortion of their existence. The discourse surrounding heterosexism can aptly be called heterocentric since it connotes something larger than sexuality alone.

**Heterocentric discourse** is hegemonic, establishing a set of dominant in-group legitimizations that subjugate out-group members. It offers rewards for social behaviors that, (a) are constructed on patriarchal definitions of male and female, (b) create power relations that justify and sustain heterosexual privilege, and (c) oppose counter-hegemonic efforts. Unlike other prejudices, heterocentric assumptions are so beguiling they go undetected by even the most equity-sensitive individuals.

Throughout a long history of oppression in Western society, lesbians and gay males, stereotyped by heterosexual assumptions, have been in a complex relationship with the dominant culture. This relationship has included resistance to cultural and political practices and power relationships. It has challenged heterocentric perceptions, metaphors, meanings, policies, beliefs, values and assumptions. This opposition, and the construction of alternatives to it, constitutes **gay and lesbian discourse**.

A glimpse into everyday life reveals numerous instances where gay and lesbian discourse is making its way into social structures. Gay themes now impact education, are found in the press, on stage, theaters, and talk shows. They electrify politics, infuse the public policy agenda and saturate pop and elite culture



(Kopkind, 1993). In recent years, gay and lesbian discourse has changed the field of preparatory and higher education. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) has the Lesbian and Gay Studies special interest group. The Gay and Lesbian School Teachers Network (GLISTEN), the National Education Association (NEA) Gay and Lesbian Caucus, and the Gay and Lesbian Curriculum and Staff Development Project reflect this. Colleges and universities, too, are engaging in this discourse, witnessed by the emergence of lesbian and gay studies departments and numerous campus debates on gay issues. Thus, the battle for equity is engaged in the arena of public schools and sites of higher learning.

This study asks, within the social maelstrom surrounding heterocentric discourse, where is adult education? Are adult educators unaware or too little concerned with the marginalization of a substantial population of adult learners? Is there a gay discourse that is sensitive to adult lesbian and gay persons? If so, where are the sites for its practice? And, have gay contributions to adult education been silenced?

### **Methodology**

An extensive literature search was conducted using sources that index more than 5,400 journal articles, books and other texts. They were, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), PsycINFO, Social Sciences Index, and the Modern Language Association (MLA) International Bibliography. The following terms were used in the database search, "gay .and education," "homosexual .and education," "heterosexism," "gay .and adult-education," "homosexual .and adult-education." Additionally, nontraditional literature from the gay community was examined.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The field of adult education has a deep and rich historical connection to social responsibility. It has been noted by Thomas and Harries-Jenkins (1975) that the dynamics between adult education and social change occur along a continuum ranging from preservation of the status quo to radical transformation of society. Starting with Dewey (1916) and the progressives of the 1920's, the goals of education have been couched in social terms. Lindeman (1929, 1945, 1961) viewed people as social beings, focusing on adult education as a collective phenomenon. Bergevin (1967) perceived education as fostering democratic ideals, and Blakely (1967) pronounced that education leads the individual to a better, more fulfilling personal life while making the world a better place to live.

Building on the transformative quality of adult education, critical pedagogy advocates radical social change. Proponents such as Friere, Illich, Horton, Reimer, and Counts recommend a catalytic role for education. From these wellsprings, a plethora of current adult educators advance a social agenda that includes

justice, equality, civil rights and democracy. Their goals are to create a more desirable society (Welton, 1991). The critical theory of Habermas provides direction for this emancipatory praxis in education (Mezirow, 1990; Hart, 1990).

Based on the premise that the field and practice of adult education has a deep and rich historical connection to social responsibility and justice, including the transformation of society, this paper examines the role that adult education plays in the emancipation and oppression of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and transsexual communities. Postmodern critical theory, emphasizing power relationships and the reproduction of social divisions, is the lens through which this analysis occurs.

### **Findings**

A literature review of ERIC (1982-1993) reveals more than 470 references for homosexuality and gay topics in education (n=471), almost exclusively related to clients whose principle social role is "schooling." The descriptors "gay" (conjoined by the boolean and) and "adult-education" yielded few references (n=3); all referred to AIDS education and adults. It is significant that the term "heterosexism," although used in Grayson's well-footnoted educational article (1987), appears only six times (n=6).

A search of the MLA International Bibliography found no encounters with permutations on "gay," "homosexual," "heterosexism" and "education" (n=0). A review of the Social Sciences Index (1983-1993) located no references using the terms "education," "homosexual," and "gay," but did retrieve two references (n=2) to "heterosexism." The psychology literature, examined in PsycINFO (1987-1993), uncovered more than one hundred (n=111) references from the combination "gay .and education." Again, these were devoted expressly to preparatory learning. The term "heterosexism" recovered 18 records (n=18). Although several have implications for higher education, only one reference (n=1) specifically relates to adult education (AIDS).

Despite more than 300 gay-themed journals/magazines and over 9000 gay- and lesbian-related library materials (Gough & Greenblatt, 1992) this review suggests that the adult education community has paid little attention to gay adults. In fact, gay discourse is a topic ignored by equity specialists in education who freely focus on sexism, ageism, racism, and other forms of elitism (Grayson, 1987). Yet, despite the absence of gay and lesbian research reported in the adult education literature, there exists a vast history of popular gay adult education knowledge and practice by people of same-sex orientation and those sensitive to it.

### **Gay Discourse in Popular Adult Education: The Insurrection of Subjugated Knowledge**

There is a vast history of popular adult education knowledge and

practice. It is largely oriented toward empowerment and to rout heterosexism discourse and its attendant homophobia from the cultural matrix. It is unacknowledged and undocumented in mainstream adult education. This resistance education occurs along a continuum from highly formal to highly informal settings.

Cultural organizations such as libraries have been sites of lesbian and gay oppression (Gough & Greenblatt, 1992) as well as resistance, liberation and social transformation (Shore and Danky, 1979; Sumerford, 1987). They play key roles in the gay self-identification process by providing resources for learners. The ALA's Gay and Lesbian Task Force has a clearinghouse that provides in-depth advice on serving gay and lesbian library clients (Gough & Greenblatt, 1990, 1992).

The role of traditional mass media in both promoting and resisting heterocentric discourse needs researched. Newscasts field gay events, gay-related science news breaks and gay public affairs topics. Many radio and television stations and newspapers promote gay-positive characters, programs and stories. The public broadcasting system, together with paid-for cable TV reach enormous audiences in the United States. The role that gay discourse plays in these informal adult education media has not been estimated, but must be enormous. Finally, the gay press reaches a large audience. Gay magazines abound and gay newspapers are available in nearly every large city in the nation; some communities have more than one gay paper-pulp press.

There exist numerous gay publishing houses. Some generate scholarly, mainstream-style publications with gay themes, while others are more alternative, offering an uncensored voice for the voiceless. For example, the low-circulation *Amazon Times*, a newsletter for and by lesbians, allows unbridled content. In it every lesbian may tell her own truth, in her own words. Like critical ethnography, it rejects "impositions by assumed meanings and [cultivates] in their place the fiercely passionate and undomesticated side of our...nature that challenges preconceived ideas (Thomas, 1993, p. 7)."

As mainstream service organizations are premier sites of adult education, so too are gay and lesbian community centers. Most large cities and some rural areas have well organized nonprofit gay and lesbian community service centers. They function as resources for learning, archives, networking, oral history, telephone hot-lines, referral services, advice, recreation, speakers bureaus, medical services and psychological support. They sponsor lectures, workshops, classes, conferences, movies, raps, coffeehouses, community dances, and potluck dinners. Their agenda covers legal advice, health education, advocacy, drug-abuse education, youth and elders programs, personal development, bereavement, various arts, literature programs, safer sex behavior, and self-defense. They provide a safe haven for disenfranchised religious groups, and a gathering place for special interest groups including those for persons with AIDS,

HIV positive individuals, transsexuals, and numerous "recovery" programs. Their extent, diverse make-up, roles, and social impacts to both the gay subculture and society at large is a wealth yet to be explored by adult educators.

Considerable adult education praxis occurs in other disparate sites across the US. For instance, gay women and men find validation and support in some churches and temples. The Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) as well as Dignity for Roman Catholics, Integrity for Episcopalians, Lutherans Concerned, and Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns provide adult educational functions. Numerous occupational associations engage in adult education to the benefit of both gay and lesbian interests and employees at large. Areas of concern are co-worker education on homosexuality and discrimination, support networking, reform in benefits and employee support programs (Kronenberger, 1991). Members of political parties organize and engage in gay discourse education. They include, the GREENS/Green Party USA's Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Queer Caucus; Republican Log Cabin Federation; Concerned Americans for Individual Rights (composed of Republicans and Libertarians); Libertarians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns; and Alice B. Toklas Democratic Clubs. There are hundreds of international, national and local interest groups engaging in, sometimes radical, counterhegemonic adult education for the personal and social liberation of gay people. Also, adult education occurs in gay bars and sex clubs. Brodsky (1993), in an ethnographic study of a male sex club, has shown that it functioned to socialize gay males into a community where self-identity was obtained. This occurred in the absence of any possibilities for mainstream intramale sexual relations. He reported that what took place "was a form of self-education and...was highly self-directed" (p. 245).

#### Significance to Adult Education

By reproducing the prevailing inequalities in status-group and class structure, adult education is a building block in the architecture of oppression. The hidden heterosexist curriculum in education transmits a limited knowledge system, one way of knowing, and narrow cultural values. Unless resisted, heterocentric discourse in education establishes a lifelong process by which individuals interact with the world in a way that violates people's human dignity and rights. Exposing and remediating oppressive practices in adult education will liberate it from complicity in the domination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgendered people. Adult education becomes richer for the inclusion of this missing historical component.

Future adult education research will need to be sensitive to heterocentric biases in research methods, in topic selection, methodological approaches, sample selection, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of results.



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**Adult Education without a Soul?**  
**Colonialism, economic progress, and democratic underdevelopment in Hong Kong**

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*Abstract. Key moments in the evolution of adult education in Hong Kong are explored: these shed light on the relationship between adult education, economic development, and democratisation under late colonialism.*

At the eleventh hour, the British government has decreed that its subjects in Hong Kong are entitled to democratic rule. This has rekindled an old debate: should societies value democratic progress above economic prosperity? In such a highly-charged area, ideology and interest often weigh more heavily than evidence. Many neo-conservatives see no problem: democratisation and capitalism are mutually reinforcing global trends; East Asian growth is a function of free markets, and free markets bring democracy. Common in East Asia is a different view: economic development has rested on a strong state and the absence of democracy in a western liberal sense. The academic literature increasingly points to the importance of state intervention in the economic development of the 'little dragons' (Henderson 1993).

Adult education has been an understudied feature of East Asian development. This paper examines the shaping of Hong Kong's adult education, and its relationship to economic and political development, by focussing on two British models introduced into post-war Hong Kong: university extra-mural education, and vocational education.

These are therefore also case studies in the politics of cultural transfer: of the introduction and reception of educational approaches. The structures of adult education in Hong Kong today in many ways mirror those of Britain. But the mirror has distorted: if many of the *structures* are similar, they incorporate very different aims, assumptions, ethos. One aspect is inescapable in the present context. Adult educators internationally have pursued three main aims: economic progress, equity, and political development. In Britain, equity and politics were central to an adult education movement. In Hong Kong, economic concerns have stood almost alone.

To compare with Britain may be an intellectual legacy of colonialism; but it is unavoidable. It is worth noting, however, that despite increasing links between Hong Kong and North America, there are marked contrasts between their approaches to adult education also. North American adult educators, for example, debate the relative importance of 'social movement' and 'profession' in the emergence of their 'field'. In Hong Kong, adult education thrives: but neither 'movement' nor 'profession' has emerged.

**Adult Education and Colonial Development.** Occupied in the 1840s by rapacious entrepreneurs whose belief in free trade was uncluttered by concern about its moral or social impact, for most of the nineteenth century Hong Kong was a trading centre pure and simple: an economic, but hardly a social, institution. Its residents were chiefly migrants, attracted by employment or income. If the economy thrived, they moved in;

when it declined, they tried their luck elsewhere. Those who did well created organisations (including schools) which served them and their circles; some provided charitable support for their poorer neighbours. Government shared this view: the public purse would provide very basic infrastructure, such as roads and fresh water; education at all levels was essentially a private affair.

Victorian England's passions lay in conquest, rather than in how colonies were administered. Hong Kong, triflingly small and several weeks travel from London, was ignored unless crises arose. Its affairs were left to the 'men on the spot': the governor, a few largely expatriate senior civil servants, lay advisors and legislators drawn almost exclusively from the European merchant class. Only after the colonisation of Africa (largely in the 1890s), did Britain begin to evolve policies for the development of its colonies. For instance, London's Colonial Office began to develop educational policies — which put emphasis on adult education — from the 1920s (Lee 1967).

Hong Kong remained largely unaffected until after 1945. Between the wars the policies were designed chiefly for the African colonies; even there the pressure to move from policy to implementation was small. But the post-war climate was different. The mystique of Empire had been shattered, and particularly by surrender to the Japanese in the Far East. In Hong Kong, colonial officials faced a broken economy and infrastructure and a surging tide of triumphant Chinese nationalism just a few miles away. New policies were needed.

These should have been available. In London, the winds of change were blowing strong: colonies should be trained in modern political institutions; Britain should take responsibility for the economic development of its colonies; the peoples of the world were entitled to decide their own destinies. Vitally, from the mid-1940s adult education was being brought to the centre of the stage, as a fundamental mechanism for achieving economic and political development (Holford 1988).

**University Extra-mural Education.** Extra-mural departments had become *de rigueur* in the new universities of Britain; to the post-war Colonial Office they seemed an important contribution to overseas development. As usual, Africa led the way, supported by enthusiastic envoys from several British departments (Fieldhouse 1985). In Hong Kong a number of university staff and senior civil servants, interned during the war, had found the experience of adult education in prison camp classes exhilarating: it 'laid the foundations for a promising development of extra-mural University teaching', according to a 1946 Report on the University's future (quoted Sweeting 1990).

The University (established in 1911) had, however, been closed and seriously damaged during the Japanese occupation. There was some doubt as to whether it would be reopened at all (Sweeting 1990). While a few extra-mural courses were held during the following decade (chiefly at the request of various government departments), it was the 1952 Keswick Report on Higher Education in Hong Kong which recommended the formation of an Extra-mural Department. Keswick, addressing with a sense of urgency educational problems caused by the Chinese Revolution (mainly the closing-off of higher educational opportunities formerly available in China to Hong Kong residents, and an immense influx of refugees), envisaged a department 'embracing temporarily a field far wider than is customary in the United Kingdom' (§143). In particular, it would cover professional and commercial subjects as well as artistic and cultural.

Though very much in step with Colonial Office thinking, Keswick aroused violent opposition in university circles. His main recommendation (which would have introduced a Chinese language curriculum and, it was claimed, led to Hong Kong University qualifications being devalued internationally) was scotched. The extra-mural proposal was watered-down: courses 'of a polytechnic character' should not be encouraged, and in any case 'a department should not be asked to do too much too quickly' (HKU 1955: §15). The first Director of Extra-mural Studies, appointed in 1956, a young English scholar with three years' extra-mural experience in Nigeria, shared these views. He had no doubt that a programme of courses 'all commercial in content, all offering some direct financial reward, all devoid of any cultural or political interest whatever ... would have been leapt at'. He therefore 'resolved to explore toward the opposite extreme', and included only one professionally-relevant course in his first year's programme. (Moore 1958: 282-4.) He secured a Carnegie grant for that classic element of the British liberal extra-mural curriculum, a book-box scheme. He organised an experimental study group course in a rural township, which involved 'village representatives, farmers, landowners, mill managers and headmasters'.

The first Director served just three years. His successor, another British adult educator recruited from Africa, was more experienced. But he was committed to the same broad approach, to seeing extra-mural studies contribute to political and social development, to community education. His vision, expressed within months of his arrival, included instituting three-year liberal studies 'tutorial classes' as 'the backbone of a University's Extra-Mural contribution'. Such courses would 'become rooted in the life of the community. They develop a continuity based on either a place or a subject.' Vocational education was 'not normally University work — except at higher levels', and in maintaining 'liberalising influences'. To this end, there would be Resident Tutors ('the key factor'), a panel of part-time tutors, a library 'to supply each class', discussion groups, residential courses, and an 'organized voluntary student body', which would involve student rallies and ensuring every class elected a 'class secretary' (HKU 1961a).

These policies did not succeed. Despite much effort in these early years, no adult education 'movement' was established. Fifteen years later, the work of the department was firmly 'concentrated in the field of continuing professional and vocational education'; indeed, this was by then regarded as a desirable response to community needs (HKU 1977). Early attempts to generate student organisation (student rallies, class secretaries' conferences) all petered out from the mid-1960s. No Resident Tutor was ever appointed. So far as I can discover, no 'tutorial class' ever took place.

This can be explained at several levels. The liberal approach stood out against the tide of public demand for vocational courses, presumably linked to the pace of economic development. Government was not supportive, placing emphasis on professional and vocational programmes. The expectation that courses cover running costs put market considerations at a premium. Among organising staff, commitment to the liberal approach was stronger among expatriates: but even they were not unanimous. Debates could be arcane: as when senior members of the University circulated memoranda on whether the University *Calendar* should use the contraction 'WEA' to describe the department's courses, or whether it should be spelled out in full: 'WEA if expanded to "Workers Educational Association" tends to be misunderstood' (HKU 1961b: emphasis in original). With its English-language emphasis, the University was not well-



placed to develop courses for the disadvantaged. The Chinese University's extra-mural department was better-positioned in this respect; but with a strong market orientation and no loyalties to British traditions, its arrival in the mid-1960s accentuated the flight from a liberal curriculum.

**Vocational Education.** Vocational or technical education evening classes had been a long-standing part of the Hong Kong scene, catering to the needs of government, naval and military establishments, and merchant dockyards which serviced the China trade. Facilities were largely destroyed during the Japanese occupation, and official thinking was initially limited to making good: 'based on the requirements of the public service and the industries of the Colony', technical education should be 'carried out on the same lines as formerly' (1944 Colonial Office policy directive, quoted Sweeting 1993: 68). This quickly proved a gross underestimation of demand, which was overwhelming. When classes were advertised in 1946, 3,000 applied. Only one-quarter could be enrolled, due to shortage of accommodation and staff (Education Department 1947).

This problem intensified as the economy developed and diversified. Before the war, as in many colonies, there had been a duality of modern and traditional sectors in Hong Kong's economy: the former, comprising government and British-owned trading firms and utilities, had more advanced technology and required more advanced skills; its supervisory and technical staff also needed some English. They required training. This sector was also strongly linked to the political and social elites of the Colony (England 1989: 58): the government Technical College's strongest connections were therefore with these companies. But from very shortly after the war, manufacturing industry grew rapidly as refugee entrepreneurs moved in from China.

For these new sections of industry, the existing vocational education system was rooted in the past. In 1948, for instance, the Chinese Engineers' Institute petitioned government to provide classes for all apprentices similar to those provided for the dockyards (Education Department 1949). The problems were in both scale and variety: the new manufacturing industries had different needs and different organisational cultures. With the government College unable to meet the demand, private technical schools grew up (though government thought their standards low and their equipment poor). The strongest demand was always for part-time evening classes which would not take staff away from their jobs.

From the late 1940s the government began to grasp the scale of industrial change. This was brought into stark relief by the Korean War and the associated embargo on trade with (now Communist) China from May 1951. Embargo on the China trade struck at the heart of the trading economy: its lifeblood and rationale for over a century. The government had to encourage alternative forms of commercial activity and employment — not least because the refugee problem did not diminish (the Colony's population grew from about 600,000 in 1945 to 2.5 millions in less than a decade).

In these circumstances, and in a short time, a marked change took place in official thinking on technical education. During 1950 a British educational administrator visited Hong Kong. His cautious recommendations hardly reflected the scale of the economic changes. Though there had 'recently been considerable industrial development', Hong Kong 'depends on its entrepôt trade'; at least the larger employers were 'co-operative' (Fisher 1951: 25). This caution was rapidly swept aside. A Committee on Technical and

Vocational Education (CTVE) was appointed: all members had 'a knowledge of industrial affairs and so the needs of local students and local industry will be kept well in view' (Education Department 1952: 92).

There were then, in quick succession, two further visits and by British advisers with an apparent brief to move things along. (Visits by UK experts were a standard mechanism for initiating change.) The Assistant Educational Adviser on Technical Education to the Secretary of State for the Colonies visited in November 1951 (Education Department 1952: 92). Technical education had to adjust more rapidly to meet the needs of a changing economy: a long-term plan was called for. In 1952 F.H. Reid, Principal of South East London Technical College, spent ten weeks in Hong Kong preparing 'a comprehensive scheme for the expansion of technical education'. At the same time, the CTVE considered 'not only the relative needs of many different industries but also the points of view of men and women closely concerned with commerce and industry, with the trade unions and with education' (Education Department 1953: 83). Its interim report (October 1953) recommended an early extension of the Technical College, a proposal accepted by government.

This marked a fundamental shift in Hong Kong policy-making. Previously, vocational education had attempted to meet the needs of employers — but overwhelmingly employers from the European sector (utilities, dockyards, and so forth). Now the government saw a role in supporting new, chiefly Chinese, manufacturing employers. Henceforth, these employers were closely integrated into the policy-making apparatus on technical and vocational training: this close relationship, by which government supported and reflected the needs of industrial capital, remains in place.

**Discussion.** These snapshots of Hong Kong's adult education in evolution suggest, rather than a conclusion, several observations. First, adult education in Hong Kong has been rooted in a colonial political economy. In September 1945, the *South China Morning Post* (quoted Sweeting 1993: 40) argued for compulsory primary education: 'We must reduce the percentage of our illiterate population before we can hope to be a fully self-governing unit.' The following two years saw the scotching, chiefly by business interests, of a major constitutional reform which would have brought Hong Kong onto a road to democratic rule (Tsang 1988). Thereafter, in contrast to many other colonies, the government shunned such experiments.

Without democracy, the state sought other mechanisms to ensure its legitimacy. It was supremely concerned to ensure economic prosperity: to this end, it cultivated links with business elites. It supported business through a range of schemes which would also be relatively popular: technical and vocational education was one aspect of this, though modest beside subsidised public housing, free primary and secondary education, and subsidised public health schemes.

Second, just as the economic success of Hong Kong reflects in part the achievement of its vocational education, so the linkage between government and employers reflects the latter's positive image of education. Policy has been underscored at every turn by positive popular attitudes to vocationally-oriented education. According to Wong (1988: 66), Shanghai's cotton spinners brought with them to Hong Kong very positive attitudes to technical training: 'each mill organised their own classes to instruct technicians'. Buoyant demand for vocationally-oriented classes has been part of the Hong

Kong scene at least since the Technical College evening classes reopened in 1946: public-sector institutes have always shared a diverse market-place with commercial and charitable concerns.

Third, the attempts to build university adult education as a democratic discourse, and on a British liberal model, appear in retrospect both heroic and bizarre. Democracy in adult education is hard to sustain without supporting social structures, whether in political culture or in a democratic social movement. The failure is, however, indicative of weaknesses in the political culture, and does not encourage optimism that political 'democracy' can now be grafted onto so deeply non-democratic a polity as Hong Kong's. Such weakness is, of course, self-perpetuating. Now, as government belatedly advocates 'democracy', Hong Kong adult education is ill-equipped to offer support — and shows little sign of wishing to do so.

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## African Americans and Adult Literacy Education: Towards a More Inclusive Model of Participation

Ronald M. James

### Abstract

The use of SES to explain non-participation is critiqued. Arguments are presented which demand that more serious study be given to structural factors related to race that affect participation.

In a article entitled, "Needed: A Multicultural Perspective", Ross-Gordon (1991) argues that adult education research has largely ignored African Americans and other peoples of color in the development of knowledge about adult education. She further adds that the "white male dominance of the research enterprise contributes to the situation" in that the "research is grounded in the concepts developed by and about the white middle-class" (p. 10). Surely, as "people of color" conduct more of the research in adult education, many of the assumptions underlying the theories and practices of the field will be scrutinized for their suitability to the experiences, conditions and interests of those others than the White, often male and middle class. It is only then that the field of adult education will be able to comprehend the potential breadth of the bias inherent in the assumptions underlying much of the present knowledge about adult education.

This paper reflects a gut reaction to certain assertions in the participation literature about socioeconomic status (SES) and its relation to participation in adult literacy education. This gut reaction is that of an African American and is the impetus behind the author's dissertation topic. It essentially challenges the "just short of causal relation" often implied in the participation literature between SES determinants and participation and raises concerns about the treatment of race (particularly as it regards African Americans) as a static, categorical variable with little regard for the broader, dynamic sociopolitical issues surrounding race.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: a) to raise questions about the treatment of SES as a determinant of participation; b) to show how the race-based experiences of African Americans which may effect participation are disregarded; and c) to propose some ways in which race could be more appropriately interpreted in the participation literature as it applies to African Americans.

### Literacy education and participation

Discussing participation within the context of literacy education lends to a different type of discussion than what might usually take place when discussing continuing or professional education. Literacy is often critiqued in terms of the larger social structure. As Heaney (1990) states: "Literacy must be understood in a broader context of class, gender, and race and linked with productive social movements which redress social inequities" (p. 15).

This cognizance of broader social forces affects how issues related to literacy education, such as participation, are interpreted. Assertions in the participation literature



which ignore the sociocultural ideologies that underlie schooling (Freire, 1970; Gee, 1990; Giroux, 1988; and Stuckey, 1991) and which perpetuate myths pertaining to race are thus easily noticeable. Dishearteningly when these types of assertions are noticed they give validity to Courtney's (1992) analysis that adult education:

At time ... appears more to resemble a club, of moderate to high exclusivity, whose entrance is on Main Street and thus visible to all, whose doors revolve for anyone to enter, but whose rules confront everyone once inside, beckoning some to advance further while rejecting many more as unworthy (pp 5-6).

#### SES as a determinant of participation

Over the last thirty years substantial efforts have been made to advance knowledge concerning about adult participation in education. Thanks to the work of Johnstone and Rivera (1965), Cross (1981), Boshier (1973), Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) and many others, several models of participation have been developed, as well as, numerous empirical tests of these theories.

Yet, much of the participation research has problems which for the most part have gone unquestioned. For one, many of the participation models rely heavily on SES as an input into participation and non-participation. With the possible exceptions of Rubenson's Recruitment Paradigm and Quigley's Resistance model, most participation models treat low SES is viewed as a determinant of non-participation while high SES is viewed as determinant of participation.

Boshier's (1973) Congruence model provides an excellent example of this point. Boshier adapts Maslow's needs hierarchy as the framework for his Congruence model. He contends that non-participants are deficiency motivated, while participants are growth motivated. According to his model, deficiency motivated people tend to feel incongruence within themselves and with their peers and are thus less likely to participate. Growth-motivated people, on the other hand, tend to feel more congruence within themselves and with their peers and are thus more likely to participate. He adds: "Deficiency and growth motivated, as well as being associated with age, are differentially distributed by social class, and are associated with other mediating variables (p.262)".

SES determinants, as Courtney (1992) points out, "are not the real causes of PAE [participation in adult education]. They are a 'front' for something else..."(p. 6). Though SES is widely accepted as reliable predictors of educational and occupational attainment (Duncan, Featherman and Duncan, 1972; and Williams, 1976), often overlooked is that SES in reality reflects conditions shaped by larger social forces (Duncan, et al, 1972; Featherman and Carter, 1976; and Hacker, 1992). Reissmann (1973) in his critique of social stratification theory points out that SES is often based on the notion that inequality no longer exists. By grounding our assumptions about participation within a framework of equality we can avoid dealing with the realities that inequality is thriving. As Beeghley (1978) notes: "With a sort of knee-jerk reaction, most Americans say they believe in equality of opportunity. After that, it is every man for himself....Thus, inequality of opportunity is inevitable" (p.xi). A second problem with SES has to do with research in social stratification. Duberman (1976) argues that the study of social stratification is made problematic by a lack of agreement among researchers concerning the definitions of terms and methods of measurement. She further suggests that preconceived notions that people are

motivated in the same ways toward upward mobility should be discarded, different dimensions of social stratification are not static but instead are themselves in constant flux (p.102).

#### Race and non-participation

Race is usually not discussed in a way that addresses the broader social, political, cultural and historical contexts in which people of color, and especially, African Americans, experience it. Featherman and Carter (1976) note that "Racial inequality of opportunity in the United States attenuates upward mobility for blacks, relative to whites, and handicaps their abilities to convert their own human capital into achievements on par with whites" (p.135-136).

Race is treated as a flat, descriptive variable, useful only for some perfunctory comparative or statistical analysis. For instance, Anderson and Darkenwald (1979) noted that after controlling for factors associated with race (i.e., educational attainment) "Black racial status has little effect on participation in adult education" (p.4). This type of analysis effectively removes from view those factors which clearly suggest that race is operant. Interestingly, on the very next page they report that African Americans, in general, and younger African Americans, in particular, are more likely to dropout. If Boshier's (1973) contention that persistence is nothing more than an ongoing decision to participate is correct, it becomes apparent that something is taking place which is not being addressed in the participation research.

Race gains more significance when also considered within the context of schooling. Participation research tends to treat as neutral. In doing so, researchers ignore the "...historical inequalities (of schooling and of social participation)..." (Walsh, 1991, p. 2). Adult literacy education programs can not divorce themselves from the defined power relationships which are practiced within all the social institutions of the society (Giroux, 1988; Jaynes and Williams, 1989; and Quigley, 1987). Social and cultural factors contributing to students leaving high school early (Fine, 1991 and Ogbu, 1974) are surely present in literacy programs. The implications of literacy as cultural currency (Gee, 1990; Giroux, 1988; Quigley, 1987; Stuckey, 1991; and Walsh, 1991), the related false hopes of mobility (Harrison, 1972; Lafer, 1993 and Ogbu, 1974), the quality of the interactions with teachers (social and instructional) and weight attached to these concerns are all likely to influence non-participation for African Americans.

#### A culturally sensitive approach to participation research

Given the argument that current models of participation do not adequately explain non-participation with regard to African Americans, the logical question becomes: "What should be done differently?" Described below are several modifications which could improve how adult education researchers' approach non-participation, especially as it concerns minority groups and their non-participation in literacy education.

First, SES should be examined from a perspective of inequality (Beeghley, 1978; and Tumin, 1985). Thus, opportunities for educational attainment and economic advancement are assumed to be unequally distributed throughout the society according to race, gender and other distinctions. Accordingly, care is taken to not over exaggerate the extent to which non-participation can be attributed to factors such as educational attainment, type of employment,

income, and parents' employment. Instead, considerable attention is given to the broader social forces within school and within the larger society which structure these unequal distributions of opportunities.

Second, race should not be masked by other variables or treated as if replaceable by SES. There is sufficient research which suggests that cultural currency variables such as educational attainment, and income, if anything, provide evidence that inequality by race is present.

Race can not be ignored or disregarded in research concerning African Americans or other minorities. The lack of overt racial oppression does not remove the existence of covert practices of racial oppression. Clearly, substantive research exist to suggest that race continues to be a persistent factor in employment (Hacker, 1992; Harrison, 1972; and Lafer, 1993); education (Jaynes and Williams, 1989; and Ogbu, 1974); and housing (Jaynes and Williams, 1989).

Third, researchers should avoid treating race as a flat, descriptive variable. Instead race needs to be understood within the social, historical, cultural, and political contexts in which it is experienced. Thus, attention must be given to the race-related issues associated with disenfranchisement that African Americans encounter. These issues may include hopelessness, alienation, distrust, resistance and powerlessness.

Fourth, schooling must be understood to be ideological and political. Culturally conscious researchers approach participation acknowledging that schooling promotes the domination and oppression of those who are not members of the dominant culture. Learners' previous experiences with schooling as well as their present perceptions influence their participation decisions. Thus, schooling (curriculum materials, instructional approaches, teachers, and school climate) is not exempt from scrutiny in a culturally conscious approach to participation research.

Fifth, participation and persistence should not be separated as research areas in literacy education. Researchers recognize that most potential adult literacy participants have previously attended literacy programs. Even though individuals may decide to participate in a literacy program today, those same individuals may decide to end participation tomorrow. What this suggests is that individuals make a daily decision to participate. At the point that individuals decides to dropout, something has become a barrier. In this regard all of the issues raised above as well as those issues relating to the more commonly accepted barriers to participation should be examined.

### Conclusion

Participation research has been conceived in ways that are biased towards African Americans and other minorities. These biases suggest that non-participation is the fault of the potential participant while no consideration if any is given to the broader social forces which may have influenced non-participation. As more minorities and others concerned with eradicating racial and cultural oppression begin to enter the field, many of the assumptions underlying adult education will be challenged. If key areas of adult education, such as participation research, are to be viewed as viable and legitimate, they must be attuned to the effects of cultural and racial oppression and these conditions impact upon not only how minority groups view schooling but how researchers also view these minorities.

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## REVITALIZING HAVIGHURST'S SOCIAL ROLE RESEARCH

by

Wayne B. James and Howard M. Abney, Jr.

**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this exploratory research was to update, revise, and content validate Havighurst's classic social role studies for use by educators and educational program planners in the 1990s. One major intent of this initial study was to generate hypotheses for further research into adult development and social role performance.

### Havighurst and His Social Role Concept

Much of the adult development life-cycle literature and its implications for practice are deeply rooted in Robert J. Havighurst's classic work in social roles (Chickering & Havighurst, 1981; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1980; Knox, 1977; Merriam, 1978). The Kansas City Study of Adult Life (from 1952 to 1955) and follow-up studies by Havighurst and his associates continue to have an impact on the adult development literature which provides a knowledge base and resource for planning and presenting curricular experiences for adults.

Havighurst (1973) believed that as much as 90% of an adult's waking time is spent in one or more of a dozen plus roles. Havighurst and his research associates identified a total of 14 distinct social roles in a series of studies (Havighurst & Albrecht, 1953; Havighurst, Munnichs, Neugarten, & Thomae, 1969; Havighurst & Orr, 1960):

|                        |                            |             |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Parent                 | Neighbor                   | Citizen     |
| Spouse                 | Acquaintance               | Friend      |
| Child of Aging Parents | User of Leisure            | Grandparent |
| Homemaker              | Church Member              | Kin         |
| Worker                 | Club or Association Member |             |

The construct "social role," as used in this paper, refers to a pattern of behaviors and attitudes related to a specific function or position as defined and expected by society. Social roles are those societal conventions to which adults are expected to conform and almost all adult life is spent functioning in the various roles (Havighurst & Orr, 1960).

Since Havighurst's initial research into the social roles of adults began in the late 1940s and was published in the 1950s, extensive changes in both the social structure and the culture of the United States may have rendered previous research data on Havighurst's social roles obsolete. Changing societal norms and expectations, rapid advances in information systems, the increased role of women in the workplace, and the worldwide economic realities of the 1990s have created a need for revitalizing Havighurst's social role concept. A crucial component of the current research was to compare responses by three variables--age, gender, and socioeconomic status--which Havighurst addressed in his research studies. However, since

Havighurst used only limited populations consisting of primarily middle and old age groups, the middle socioeconomic status level, and traditional families, one major goal of this research was to ensure that the entire adult age range (18 to 90+ years), all socioeconomic status levels, and ethnic/racial and gender diversity were included as part of the study procedures.

### Research Methods

The major activities of this aspect of the research study utilized five separate groups to revitalize Havighurst's social roles: 1) the Research Team; 2) the Pilot Panel; 3) the Initial Validation Panel; 4) the Verification Panel; and 5) the individuals involved in the data collection.

The Research Team furnished the groundwork for the process that was to follow. As a starting point, the team compiled an initial listing of social roles from all of the original studies conducted by Havighurst and his colleagues.

Following the initial listing of social roles, a Pilot Panel provided reaction to, recommendations for, and critique of the instruments used to collect data from the expert panels. Based on the suggestions from the first task of the Pilot Panel, subsequent experts were provided a brief explanation/definition of the social roles.

Approximately 40 individuals for both an Initial Validation Panel and a Verification Panel were selected for their expertise in the areas of adult education, adult development, sociology, psychology, gerontology, and other fields related to the social roles. The panel members provided feedback on the identified social roles and later served to content validate the resulting list of roles.

Data were then collected on the Community Survey developed as a result of the previous steps. Using the questionnaire, the final activity of this study assessed social role importance in an adult population dispersed by age, gender, and SES levels. A stratified quota sample of 300 respondents separated individuals into 30 cells of three age categories and five SES levels by gender. The three age groupings were Young (18 to 34 years old), Middle (35 to 64 years old), and Older (age 65 and above). The five SES levels and estimated percentage of the United States population for each of the levels were Disenfranchised (15%), Working (25%), Lower Middle (35%), Upper Middle (20%), and Elite (5%) (Beeghley, 1989; Robertson, 1989; Rossides, 1990). Special procedures, based on the Nam-Powers Socioeconomic Status measure (Nam & Powers, 1983), were developed to ensure that respondent SES level was identified in a systematic process. From the data collected, univariate and multivariate analyses of variance were conducted on the importance ratings.

### Initial Findings of Social Role Importance

Based on the responses from the panels and the Community Survey, the following 13 social roles (with their resulting rank order for all subjects) were identified as the major adult social

roles for the 1990s: Association/Club Member (13), Citizen (7), Daughter/Son (5), Friend (1), Grandparent (12), Home/Services Manager (8), Kin/Relative (3), Learner (4), Leisure Time Consumer (10), Parent (6), Religious Affiliate (11), Spouse/Partner (2), and Worker (9).

Results of the community survey also indicated that there were some significant differences in perceived role importance based on gender, age, and socioeconomic status. However, it should be noted that these differences were not uniform across all roles, but rather were unique to specific roles and variable interactions. Other factors which contributed to overall ratings of role importance are worth noting. Not all of the respondents in the community survey performed each of the roles, as is true in the general adult population. Therefore, while some roles, such as parent and grandparent, are tremendously important to those adults who fulfill those roles, others, such as friend and kin/relative, are rated higher because the majority of adults customarily perform these roles.

Analysis of results related to the gender variable revealed significant differences in the perceived importance of the roles of grandparent, worker, and learner. Significant differences by age existed in the roles of association/club member, daughter/son, grandparent, religious affiliate, and worker. Significant differences related to SES level were found in the roles of association/club member, home/services manager, leisure time consumer, religious affiliate, and spouse/partner.

#### Discussion of Individual Roles

Each of the social roles is discussed below. The discussion is presented in the order of identified importance by the respondents in the community survey.

The FRIEND role is defined as the interaction with both females and males with whom one has chosen to spend time and develop a relationship. At first, it seemed a little surprising that this role was rated as the most important; however, since this is the one interpersonal relationship role in which all individuals participate, it is not unusual that this role was rated high. Results tended to be similar by age, gender, and socioeconomic status.

The SPOUSE/PARTNER role is defined as activities associated with one's marriage or intimate relationship involving both couple and individual identity. For those individuals who are either married or who define themselves as being in a significant intimate relationship, this was a highly rated role. Young adults tended to rate this role as more important than the other two age groups. Also as SES level rose, the groups tended to have higher ratings for this role. The importance of this role by gender was similar.

The KIN/RELATIVE role is defined as the relationships and activities with all relatives other than parents, children, and spouses. These relationships might include siblings, nephews, nieces, cousins, and spouse's relatives as well as other relationships not specifically identified. Females tended to



rate this role higher than males. Age and SES level were similar.

The LEARNER role is defined as activities related to the acquisition of knowledge and the development of learning skills. The older age group tended to rate the learner role lower than the other two age groups. All other age and SES level ratings were similar.

The DAUGHTER/SON role is defined as one's adult relationship and activities with his/her own parents/step-parents or with the spouse's parents/step-parents. Females tended to rate this role higher than males, while the older age group rated this role much lower than the other two groups. This latter rating is not surprising for the older age group when the fact that many parents would now be deceased and the importance of the current role activity would be lessened.

The PARENT role is defined as the relationship and activities relating to being a father, mother, or step-parent. The overall rating of this role was impacted by the fact that over one-third of the respondents were not married. Young adults and the disenfranchised rated this role lower than the other groups.

The CITIZEN role is defined as community/civic, environmental, political, patriotic, or volunteer activities related to social issues/concerns in one's neighborhood, town, state, nation, or earth. Young adults tended to rate this role lower than the other two age groups. All other ratings were similar.

The HOME/SERVICES MANAGER role is defined as the activities in acquiring a place to live, managing ordinary household tasks, handling financial aspects of living, and performing as a consumer of various services. Females, middle-aged adults, and the disenfranchised SES level rated this role higher than the comparison groups.

The WORKER role is defined as activities related to the job for which one receives pay or still performs although retired. The overall rating of this role was impacted by the fact that many respondents were retired and were no longer participating in the worker role. The disenfranchised SES level rated the importance of this role lower than the other SES levels. This is probably due to the fact that, by definition, the disenfranchised included individuals in the lowest paying jobs and/or not working.

The LEISURE TIME CONSUMER role is defined as the activities undertaken for recreation or diversion during one's discretionary time. Upper-middle SES and middle-aged adults tended to rate the importance of this role higher than the comparison groups.

The RELIGIOUS AFFILIATE role is defined as participation in religious activities related to one's beliefs in a spiritual being(s). Females, older adults, and the disenfranchised SES level tended to rate this role as more important than did the other groups. The older age adult group has been shown by other researchers to be more active in religious activities as a result of their upbringing, rather than a difference based on changes with age.

The GRANDPARENT role is defined as the relationship and activities related to being a grandparent. The low rating of this role is not surprising because most individuals under the age of 35 are rarely grandparents. In fact, some middle-aged adults are often not grandparents. It should also be recognized that some experts believe that the Grandparent role is merely an extension of the parent role. For the 65+ years group, only three other roles were rated as more important than the Grandparent role. For the 18-34 years old group, this role was perceived as the least important.

The ASSOCIATION/CLUB MEMBER role is defined as participation and activities in organized groups, including social, civic, fraternal, athletic, patriotic, and/or auxiliary. This role was uniformly perceived as the least important by all groups. The elite and upper SES levels tended to rate the importance of this role significantly higher than the disenfranchised.

#### Implications of the Study

While this research was exploratory in nature and the use of quota sampling techniques and the urban, geographical limits of the respondents preclude generalizability, the study served to content validate the major adult social roles in the United States in the 1990s. The study also validated Havighurst's Kansas City Study social roles. With the exception of the friend and worker roles, the rank ordering of the roles between the two respondent groups was essentially the same after almost 50 years. The family cluster of roles--spouse/partner, parent, daughter/son, kin/relative, and friend--were the most highly ranked roles in the 1992 community surveys and were among the highest roles in the 1952 Kansas City Study, while the personal cluster--association/club, religious affiliate, and citizen were at the bottom of both studies.

This study was the initial study of an effort to construct a performance scale to assess social role performance/accomplishment. Other major projects associated with this continuing research include the integration of developmental events (transitional changes) within each of the social roles and a performance rating scale for each social role. Havighurst and Orr (1960) regarded the ability to assess social role performance and to identify various groupings of adults at specific levels of social role achievement as paramount to planning adult education programs. An adult social role performance rating scale would be a useful tool to assist educators in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating quality programs for adult learners.

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## "STUDENTS AT RISK: "A PRACTITIONER-BASED APPROACH TO NONCOMPLETION IN ADULT EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** The primary purpose of this study was to statistically assess the efficacy of an instrument designed by a task force of program teachers, volunteers, administrators and researchers to prospectively differentiate completing from noncompleting students in adult basic education. Three broad groups of enrollment patterns were identified and analysis of variance demonstrated statistically significant difference among these three groups. Post hoc analysis found significant difference between the mean number of risk factors identified for completing and noncontinuing students. In addition, potentially important practical differences were found among outcome of enrollment groups on ten of the fourteen "risk factors".

Recent publication of the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, and Kolstad, 1993) suggests that the degree of low level literacy in the United States is greater than anticipated. Adult education programs designed to address this need reach only 8% of the target population (Pugsley, 1990) and many programs suffer attrition rates in excess of 50% (Beder, 1991; Jha & Dirkx, 1992). High rates of attrition have been identified by Quigley (1992) as the number one program issue in literacy education. Beder (1991) indicates that those most in need of literacy education, are the least likely to seek it or to persist once enrolled. Most ABE students do not attend literacy program for long periods of time (Jha & Dirkx, 1992; Sticht, 1988) and thus the first few hours in class are critical for identifying those students who need additional resources to make them feel both comfortable and motivated to stay in class. Lack of adequate literacy skills is consistently linked to characteristics of social and economic disadvantage such as unemployment, substandard housing, and inadequate medical care (Fitzsimmons, 1991). Thus, it is imperative that opportunities for literacy education for every student be enhanced.

Despite numerous studies which have developed prediction models or identified typologies of students most likely to participate, dropout, or remain in literacy programs, clear, effective and empirically grounded programmatic responses to the problem of retention have yet to be articulated. Few, if any, prior efforts have actively involved practitioners in studying, addressing, and developing materials within the contexts of their own programs. Even fewer studies have systematically evaluated materials and interventions and their impact on attrition. One research approach to the problem of noncontinuation is to identify student characteristics associated with attrition or persistence. However, few studies have attempted to develop an instrument which is both theoretically grounded and of practical use to teachers. A significant number of comparative studies in adult education have focused on identifying students perceived to be at risk of "dropping out". Psychosocial variables: goal-setting, motivation, personality, resistance, interaction patterns, life change and commitment, have been a fertile area for differentiating students who continue or persist in adult basic education programs (Bosma, 1988; Diekhoff & Diekhoff, 1984; Garrison, 1985, 1988; Martin, 1984, 1987, 1990; and Quigley, 1990). Other prediction models of noncontinuation have centered on socio-demographic attributes such as employment, marital status, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, family members, and age



(Bosma, 1988; Diekhoff & Diekhoff, 1984; Jha & Dirkx, 1992; Rachal, Jackson, & Leonard, 1987; and Smith, 1985). Additionally, academic variables; academic ability, entry-level grade equivalency scores, and testing, have often been used as discriminating factors to distinguish noncontinuing students from those who persist (Bosma, 1988; Jha & Dirkx, 1992; Martin, 1988; and Smith, 1985).

Many of these studies have reported some success in predicting or identifying "at risk" students. Yet, this research has not generated an empirically-tested instrument that can be readily implemented by practitioners within learning settings without undue cost or additional intrusion on students' time. The purpose of this study was to statistically assess the efficacy of an instrument designed by a practitioner task force to differentiate completing from noncompleting students in adult basic education. Using understanding of prior research and theory, and perceptions of a practitioner task force, a "Risk Factor Guide" was developed to help teachers identify who may be at risk of not completing goals.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study took place in a community college-based ABE program over a three year period. Potential factors contributing to student attrition were identified from data collected on more than 2323 students and from student and teacher interviews. Analysis of this data led to a recognition of broad patterns of enrollment within the student population and identification of several variables which seemed to influence whether or not students stayed in class long enough to complete goals they had set for themselves (Dirkx & Jha, forthcoming).

A practitioner task force, of two teachers, two instructional volunteers, a program supervisor, a volunteer coordinator and two university researchers was formed and over a period of several weeks, analyzed the data that had been gathered from their program pertaining to completion and dropout. Summaries of pertinent literature were also reviewed. Using insights gained from their review, the task force constructed three strategies; assessment/feedback, orientation and assessment/feedback, and orientation, assessment/feedback and goal setting to increase retention rates. These strategies were implemented and tested in six program sites. A "Risk Factor Guide" checklist was developed by the task force as part of the assessment/feedback component, a component of all three strategies. Fourteen variables from the research data base (including a review of the literature) were identified by the task force as potentially important identifiers of students who were "at risk" of leaving class before completing their goals. Sample items on the "Risk Factor Guide" included; did not finish the TABE tests, scored below grade level 10.0 on the TABE reading test, scored below grade level 8.0 on the TABE math test, black or Native American, below \$10,000 income, and under age 35 (See Table 1 for a complete list). Participating teachers checked appropriate risk factors on the instrument for each student. The simple checklist was easily completed with information gathered during the assessment phase of the strategy. Analysis was conducted on 147 of the 153 adults participating during the nine month study period. For each student, individual factors as well as total risk factors checked were recorded. Mean and median number of risk factors were examined by outcome of student enrollment (those who completed a goal, those who discontinued and those who were continuing). A one-way ANOVA with a Tukey follow up were used to discover differences and significance. Additionally, percents were compared for each risk factor by outcomes of enrollment. Those factors representing a less than 10 point difference across the outcome groups

were not considered practically significant. Finally, all participating teachers were interviewed regarding their experience using the "Risk Factor Guide" and their responses were qualitatively analyzed.

### FINDINGS

Differences in both mean and median number of risk factors were found among outcome of enrollment groups. A mean of 3.0 risk factors were identified for completing students, compared to 5.0 for continuing students and 4.4 for non-continuing students. Analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) demonstrated statistically significant difference among the three groups ( $F(2,145)=3.6$ ;  $p = .0298$ ). Post hoc analysis using the Tukey follow up method found significant difference between completing and noncontinuing students but not between completing and continuing students. Frequency distributions among the three outcome groups are a possible explanation for the lack of significance between completing and continuing students (completing,  $n=31$ , continuing,  $n=37$ , and noncontinuing students,  $n=80$ ).

Considerable practical differences were found among outcome of enrollment groups on ten of the fourteen "risk factors" (See Table 1). Generally, continuing and non-continuing students were more alike than were either group when compared to completing students. Only 7.7% of completing students, for example, scored below 10.0 on the TABE reading test compared to 56% of continuing students and 33.8% of non-continuing students. Similar results were found for those scoring below 8.0 on the TABE math test. Sixty percent of continuing students, 54.4% of noncontinuing students and 38.5% of completing students reported incomes less than \$10,000 per year. Completing students (30.8%) were less likely to be enrolled in a program that was discontinuous (did not meet over the summer) than were non-continuing students (44.1%). Although the variable "percent who were minority students" did not meet the criteria of 10% difference, continuing (20%) and noncontinuing students (19.1%) were more likely than completing students (11.5%) to be a minority. Forty-eight percent of continuing students compared to 3.8% completing students and 23.5% non-continuing students started at Level 1A. Unexpected findings included very little practical difference among the three groups in the proportion of students attending grades 11 and 12 and proportion who did not finish an entry level test. Additionally there was little difference among the three groups in the proportion of students giving GED as a reason for enrollment. Teacher feedback on the use of the instrument suggested they found it quite easy to use and perceived it to be helpful in identifying students at risk of noncontinuation.

### DISCUSSION

This study suggests that students who do not complete adult basic education programs present a higher number of risk factors at enrollment, compared to completing students. This has implications for program planning and initial orientation of students. Students who do not attain literacy goals are at continued "risk" of being linked to characteristics of disadvantage such as unemployment, underemployment, inadequate medical care, welfare, and substandard housing. Researchers recognize the difficulty of identifying one or two variables that will differentiate completers from noncontinuing students. By using multiple variables, the "Risk Factor Guide" checklist acknowledges the complexity surrounding the ABE student and draws on theory and practitioner expertise to validate its usefulness. In addition it asks for information easily obtainable from early assessments of the student. Previous attempts to predict students "at risk

risk of dropping out have used various tools which usually require additional time, expense, and resources to administer and have limited practical use for the practitioner. Practitioner use of the "Risk Factor Guide" checklist could be an important component of initial orientations and assessment/feedback in ABE classrooms. A knowledge of students who may be more of risk of dropping out helps the practitioner make better matches between the learning needs of participating students and the environments and experiences provided by educational programs.

This study contributes to a theoretical perspective of "students at risk" and contributes to our overall understanding of attrition. Finally, the project provides a framework through which practitioners and researchers can collaborate to address practice problems in both a theoretically and practically meaningful manner.

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Table 1.  
Risk Factor by Outcome of Enrollment

|                                                                          | All Students | Completing<br>Students | Continuing<br>Students | Noncontinuing<br>Students |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mean Number of Risk Factors                                              | 4.2          | 3.0                    | 5.0                    | 4.4                       |
| Median Number of Risk Factors                                            | 4.0          | 3.0                    | 5.0                    | 4.0                       |
| Percent Attended Grades 11 & 12                                          | 44.4         | 46.2                   | 42.6                   | 44.0                      |
| Percent Started at Level 1A                                              | 24.2         | 3.8                    | 48.0                   | 23.5                      |
| Percent Who Took Level M on TABE Test                                    | 11.3         | 3.8                    | 12.0                   | 14.7                      |
| Percent Who Did Not Finish an Entry Level Test                           | 8.9          | 7.7                    | 8.0                    | 10.3                      |
| Percent Who Scored Below 10.0 on TABE Reading Test                       | 33.9         | 7.7                    | 56.0                   | 33.8                      |
| Percent Who Scored Below 8 on TABE Math Test                             | 34.7         | 11.5                   | 48.0                   | 36.8                      |
| Percent Who are Minority Students                                        | 16.9         | 11.5                   | 20.0                   | 19.1                      |
| Percent Whose Income is Below \$10,000 Per Year                          | 51.6         | 38.5                   | 60.0                   | 54.4                      |
| Percent Who Are Under 35 Years of Age                                    | 82.3         | 73.1                   | 88.0                   | 82.4                      |
| Percent Who Gave GED as a Reason for Enrollment                          | 85.5         | 84.6                   | 88.0                   | 85.3                      |
| Percent Who Gave Improvement of Math or Reading as Reason for Enrollment | 22.6         | 11.5                   | 20.0                   | 26.5                      |
| Percent Who Were in a Discontinuous Program                              | 37.9         | 30.8                   | 32.0                   | 44.1                      |
| Percent Who Attended Classes in the Evening                              | 38.7         | 34.6                   | 48.0                   | 33.8                      |

## **Teaching Behaviour as a Function of Faculty's Teaching Philosophy**

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### **Abstract**

The intent of this study was to investigate whether the implicit goals of higher education, critical thinking and self-direction in learning, are accounted for in the university setting by faculty who, on an espoused level, subscribe to these goals. Results indicated that some discrepancies existed between faculty's espoused philosophy of teaching and their observed teaching behaviour. Instructors' teaching behaviour, however, was a function of their personal theory of practice (theory-in-use). The repertory grid is suggested to be a suitable tool for identifying underlying assumptions. Psychological type and locus of control orientation are suggested to make a difference in the way faculty understand themselves as teachers; however, the small number of participants does not allow for any generalizations to be made.

### **Theoretical framework**

The research was based on Schön's (1986) notion of the reflective practitioner, Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory, Jung's (1971) theory of psychological types, and Rotter's (1966) notion of locus of control. Brookfield (1986) and Schön emphasize the importance of building a theory of practice and propose that teaching practice is a function of the values and beliefs teachers hold about their practice. Although limited research exists on the teaching philosophy and practice of university faculty (Scott, Chovanec, & Young, 1993) it has not been investigated to date whether faculty, who formally subscribe to critical thinking and self-direction as important goals in higher education, also make attempts to foster these skills in their adult learners, and if so, whether and how personality characteristics such as dominant personal constructs, faculty psychological type, and locus of control orientation make a difference in teaching philosophy and teaching behaviour.

### **Methodology**

The present study followed a qualitative methodology. The relationships studied were between faculty's beliefs about teaching, their personality characteristics, and their teaching behaviour.

### **Sample Selection**

The sight of this research is a medium size Canadian University. In March, 1993 a letter asking for participation in a study investigating the relationships between faculty's teaching philosophy, their teaching behaviour, [and their students' critical thinking and self-directed learning (part of the larger project)] was sent to all instructors in the social science, humanities, business, and science departments. Four out of these 80 instructors agreed to participate in the study, stating that they recognized critical thinking and self-direction in learning as important goals in higher education. These four instructors, of whom three were male, were from accounting, politics, classics, and physical education. Two were full-time professors with a finished doctorate, one was a part-time instructor

with a master's degree, and one was a teaching assistant who was in the process of getting a doctorate degree. Each participant had a minimum of five years of teaching experience in university.

### Research Design

Each of the four faculty members met with the researcher for an individual interview which followed a semi-structured approach. Each interview lasted for about two hours and was audiotaped (on one occasion notes were taken instead). The main interview questions were chosen so as to address the six dimensions of a teaching philosophy as identified by Scott, Chovanek, and Young (1993). These are seen to be assumptions about teaching and learning (or here, the purpose of higher education), a view of the learner, a view of the role of the teacher, the strategies used, a view on evaluation, and perceived constraints and resistances. The interviews were later transcribed verbatim. Each transcription was then analyzed in terms of the six dimensions which guided the interview, i.e., data considered irrelevant for the purpose of the study were dismissed by the researcher. These abstracts were then further condensed (in terms of essentials) so as to fit them into a table describing faculty's "key views" on each dimension of a teaching philosophy.

It is important to restate the primary research question, which was 'Do faculty, who on an espoused level advocate critical thinking and self-direction as important goals in higher education, apply teaching behaviours (their theory-in-use) which are compatible with their espoused beliefs?'. During the interview, faculty deliberately were not explicitly questioned on their views on the importance of critical thinking and self-direction as goals in higher education, but a more general framework (Scott, Chovanec, and Young, 1993) was selected to guide the interview. This was done so as to keep the likelihood of manipulation of faculty responses as low as possible; it was suspected that faculty who were explicitly asked to state their beliefs on the two educational goals critical thinking and self-direction, may express a deeper concern for these two goals than they would if no manipulation had taken place. The letter, which was sent to faculty to seek their participation in the study, did also not include any definition of critical thinking and self-directed learning. This was decided so as to not influence faculty's own interpretations of the two concepts. The university's mission statement also advocates the fostering of student critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and self-direction in learning, without ever making the attempt to define these concepts. It appeared therefore to be reasonable to infer that each faculty member has his or her own constructions of what these concepts mean. According to these considerations, it was next explored what kind of an understanding of critical thinking and self-direction the professors seem to advocate. The summarized responses from the interview data was next scrutinized in terms of statements expressing a concern for critical thinking and self-direction as important goals in higher education so as to infer the individual faculty member's understanding of these two concepts.

The individual meeting was also used for a repertory grid administration. The repertory grid techniques is based on Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory. Kelly believed that every individual is a scientist and understands the world in terms of

hierarchically ordered subjective constructs, which, if made explicit through critical reflection, may change and be substituted by a new and more valid construct. Zuber-Skerritt (1991) made the point that questionnaires and interviews used in research, by nature, manipulate the participants, since their own thinking is restricted by the language chosen by the researcher. She upholds the use of a less intimidating tool; the repertory grid. In this study the repertory grid technique was used to compare faculty's own subjective constructs of educator roles to their espoused theory (interview data) and theory-in-use (observation data).

Faculty were asked to rate 11 supplied elements (educator roles, including the role "myself"), on a scale from 1 to 7, in terms of a number of bipolar constructs (i.e., interpretation schemes defined by an emergent and an implicit construct, e.g., "collaborative (2) versus hierarchical (1)"), which they were asked to elicit themselves. The constructs were elicited by faculty being asked to indicate from a random triad of educator roles (each role was written on a card and faculty were asked to pick three cards) **which two of the three were similar and thereby different from the third** (Kelly, 1955). They were also asked to rate each element in terms of one supplied construct ("effective versus ineffective"). The number of constructs per grid was not predetermined. Three faculty members elicited six constructs themselves, one faculty member elicited seven constructs. The grids were analyzed manually. Each of the 11 columns with element ratings were rearranged in terms of their correlation with the other elements (highly correlated elements were placed next to each other). Correlations among constructs were also explored. In particular, it was of interest to see whether the "effective versus ineffective" construct was highly correlated with any other construct in the grid, since a correlation provides a clear indication of the grounds by which the instructor assessed effectiveness in education.

Faculty were observed in one session of their teaching. Three sessions were videotaped. Concise field notes were later translated into a thick description narrative and forwarded to faculty with the purpose of data triangulation. The data from the teaching observation (the narrative) were then analyzed and categorized in terms of six dimensions of teaching behaviour which, in a previous study (Kreber, 1993), were found to be critical in teaching. These categories were a concern for encouragement, support, challenge, open communication, participation, and direction. Data were not verbally transformed but each category was supported by quotes from this narrative. These quotes were then compared to faculty's explicitly stated philosophy of teaching (their espoused theory) as well as to the repertory grid data.

In order to investigate whether personality characteristics (apart from assumptions and beliefs faculty hold about teaching in higher education), such as psychological type and locus of control in teaching, would be related to faculty's theory of practice, faculty also completed a psychological type indicator ("PET Type Check") and a descriptive locus of control scale for teachers (LOCSFT). Although these data were collected quantitatively, they were treated descriptively in the later analysis. The LOCSFT is an instrument that borrows some items, as well as the 4-point scale format, from the James' scale (1957), but has not been standardized to date.



### Findings

Although each instructor made some reference during the interview to critical thinking and self-direction as goals in higher education, the extent to which this was done differed considerably. Four espoused teaching philosophies could be identified: the "humanist-critical" tradition (physical education), the "traditional mental discipline" (classics), the "pragmatist-critical" (politics), and the "cognitive problem-solving approach" (accounting). Of particular interest was the instructor's view on the role of the learner. Whereas the humanist-critical instructor worked from the assumption that the **"learner is good"** (the instructor said: "students do have competencies and experiences", "have a readiness to learn", "have unique personalities", etc), the "pragmatist-critical" faculty member seemed to suggest that the **"learner can be good"** (quotes include "students need to be active participants in the learning process", "should acquire academic and interpersonal skills", "they can be motivated", etc), the traditional instructor assumed that the **"student is bad"** ("they are not too much interested in the subject matter", "they are here to get a degree"), which seemed also to be the underlying assumption of the cognitive problem solver instructor ("They should be involved", "they should learn from discovery", "they should think critically").

The repertory grid analysis, on two occasions, identified differences between the instructor's espoused teaching philosophy and their real beliefs about educator roles. A high degree of congruity between faculty's espoused beliefs and the grid data seemed to suggest that these faculty have a theory of practice which they arrived at through thoughtful reflection. According to research findings by Richards, Gipe, Levitov, & Speaker (1989), who identified internal locus of control as a characteristic of reflective practitioners, it was assumed, that faculty members with an internal locus of control orientation would show a higher degree of compatibility between their espoused theory and their real beliefs. This assumption, however, could not be satisfactorily supported. Although those faculty whose espoused philosophy and theory-in-use were in tune, did have an internal locus of control orientation, one faculty member for whom a discrepancy between theory-in-use and espoused theory was found, also received a LOCSFT score suggesting an internal locus of control. (However, it is possible that the LOCSFT is subject to a social desirability response bias which might be more critical for some individuals than for others).

It is interesting that all four faculty considered themselves effective in their role as educators. However, not one of the remaining 10 elements (educator roles) was considered effective by all four instructors. Not one of these elements (educator roles) was considered ineffective by all four instructors.

The humanist-critical faculty member construed "myself" similar to the "mentor" and "facilitator" role, which she also considered most effective. However, some differences existed among these roles. "Myself" was seen to be process-oriented, caring, person-oriented, assuming a medium position between "guide" and "fellow traveller", rough, assuming a medium position between "with you" and "for you", dutiful, and effective. "Friend" and "expert" were both considered ineffective. There was no clear correlation between the effective-ineffective construct with any other elicited construct.

The grid data were congruent with the interview data.

The traditional faculty member construed "myself" similar to the "planner", "instructor", and "mentor" role, which he also considered more effective than the others. "Myself" was construed as assuming a medium position on "involving learning" versus "being static", being an expert, being a traditional teacher, assuming a medium position on "teaches without being a learner" versus "being a student", being a designer of a course, a source of information, and effective. It is interesting that "facilitator", "provocateur", and "friend" are seen to "challenge assumptions" but at the same time to be ineffective. The "model" was also considered ineffective, and is correlated with the other three elements. Those educator roles which were seen to be effective received low ratings on challenging assumptions. A weak correlation could be identified between the "effective versus ineffective" construct and "involves learning versus more static". In terms of the interview data it is interesting that the instructor views himself as not to be challenging assumptions. However, "to select challenging texts" was seen important in the interview. Some incongruence did therefore exist between his espoused theory and the grid data.

The pragmatic-critical faculty member construed "myself" similar to instructor, facilitator, and planner, which were all considered highly effective. Some differences among these roles exists, however. "Mentor", "model", and "friend" were considered ineffective. "Myself" was construed as participatory, being a mentor, a referee, an organizer, action oriented, and effective. Of particular interest in this grid was that the two constructs "effective versus ineffective", and "organizer versus disseminator", were positively correlated. Being an organizer, for this instructor, has connotations with being effective as an educator. These data supported the interview data.

The grid of the "cognitive problem-solver" revealed a tendency of not being able to differentiate between some of the educator roles (very high correlations among elements). The instructor role received the most differentiated ratings, probably because it is the one this faculty is most familiar with. "Instructor", however, was considered the least effective. This faculty member construed "myself" similar to "planner", "expert" and "mentor", which all got the highest rating for effectiveness. "Myself" was construed as having expertise, being closer on the "closer relationship" side than on "instruction", having a concern for "shared learning" (as contrasted from "challenge"), as helping, as more interested in the students than in the subject matter, and as effective. "Effective versus ineffective" and "expertise versus communication" showed a high positive correlation, indicating that effectiveness was seen to come with expertise. Two other constructs, ("closer relationship versus instruction" and "shared learning versus challenge") show almost a perfect match, suggesting this person's construction of instruction to imply challenge. However, the correlation between the two educator roles "myself" and "instructor" is low. The grid data revealed some inconsistencies with the instructor's espoused theory.

The data from the teaching observations were congruent with the espoused philosophy of teaching and the repertory grid data for two instructors; the humanist-critical (physical education) and the pragmatist-critical (politics). Their preference for a certain psychological function seemed to be expressed through their teaching behaviour

certain psychological function seemed to be expressed through their teaching behaviour and also through their espoused beliefs. For the other two instructors, the traditional (Classics) and the cognitive problem-solver (Accounting) some incongruity could be identified. Again psychological type was expressed in their practice. This preference could also be detected in their espoused beliefs; however, some expressed (espoused) beliefs were "atypical" for the faculty members preference. Psychological type did not prove to be a strong determining variable in terms of faculty's compatibility of espoused theory and theory-in-use.

### Conclusions

Although all four instructors subscribed to critical thinking and self-direction as important goals in higher education, the degree to which this concern was accounted for in the classroom differed across participants. Faculty seemed to have different understandings as to what critical thinking and self-direction meant, and this could be identified in the interview. The repertory grid technique proved to be an appropriate technique to identify discrepancies in espoused theory and theory-in-use, which were further supported by the observation data. It is suggested that, to some degree, psychological type does influence one's assumptions about teaching and also one's practice. Locus of control could be an indicator for reflectivity of an educator, which may result in a high degree of compatibility between espoused theory and theory-in-use. The study supports the assumption that one's teaching practice is driven by one's genuine beliefs. It is suggested, that the repertory grid technique is a suitable tool to stimulate reflection on one's practice, since it provides opportunities to challenge previously acquired constructs, which may ultimately lead to new (re)constructions and, hence, to enhanced practice. In this study the participants were involved in that their voices were heard. However, because of time constraints it was not possible to discuss the repertory grids with faculty. Although the study shares some features with action research, it seems paramount now, as a second step, to discuss the rep.grid with faculty so as to stimulate critical reflection and possible instructional interventions.

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## ADULT LEARNING IN THE AFTERMATH OF JOB LOSS: EXPLORING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL

by Terri Deems Laswell

**Abstract:** A qualitative design was used to explore the experience of job loss and to gain insight into the ways in which adults learn and change within this context. Findings reveal incidental learning and new meaning perspectives as central components of the job loss experience. This study contributes to a growing empirical exploration of transformative learning and re-frames the experience of job loss in terms of opportunities for fundamental change and transformation.

Unplanned, uncontrollable change is a given in today's society. Social and economic turbulence is perhaps most sharply felt by the workforce and the demand for radical change within the workplace. In response to new demands and expectations, organizations are implementing innovative changes and permanent redesign, exemplifying an organizational paradigm shift (Ketchum & Trist, 1992). Such a shift can only come about, however, as a result of deep change within the individual—a personal paradigm change—involving the values, beliefs, and axioms that form an essential part of one's identity. In essence, a perspective transformation.

Evidence of the tumultuous nature of the workforce can be clearly seen in the overwhelming incidence of job loss. Job loss and unemployment has been explored within many disciplines including psychology, sociology, and the arena of employment counseling. A review of related literature reveals a focus on identifying characteristics of the unemployed (Amundson & Borgen, 1982; Merriam, 1987; Winegardner, et al, 1988; Kieselbach & Lunser, 1990), models for termination practices (Gordon, 1985; Deems, 1989; Cope, 1991), prescriptions for instrumental support and assistance to the job loss survivor (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Kieselbach & Lunser, 1990), and suggestions for successful behavioral strategies to cope with this life event (Runde, 1982; McKnight, 1991). Little, however, has been done in terms of looking at job loss from the perspective of personal change and adult learning, and existing research falls short in looking at how adults change as a result of job loss and the role of learning in this process. In their study of life transitions, Aslanian and Brickell (1980) found that adults in job loss transition have an extremely high rate of participation in organized learning activities. This alone indicates a need to increase awareness of the job loss experience and its potential impact on formal learning. In my own work with job loss survivors, however, I have seen a compelling need for more than instrumental solutions and cognitive acquisition. Rather, people have demonstrated a consistent pattern of change, often encompassing their world views, belief systems, and ways of viewing themselves in relations with others.

Such a personal paradigm shift is analogous to transformative learning theory. In his work with transformative learning Jack Mezirow (1991) identified job loss as a possible disorienting dilemma resulting from personal crisis, that could indeed lead to a perspective transformation. It is through this lens that this study was undertaken. The growing



incidence of job loss and the fact that adults turn increasingly to a wide range of learning activities as a way of making job loss transitions have generated a need to more fully understand the nature of the job loss experience and the ways in which adults change as a result of this experience. This inquiry sought, through qualitative means, to explore the nature of job loss and the experiences of change and personal development within this context.

### THE RESEARCH INQUIRY

A case study was undertaken utilizing the paradigm of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using purposive sampling, six participants were selected from communication, manufacturing, agriculture, health and educational industries. The primary methods of data collection involved multiple observations of a job loss support group, semi-structured interviews, and follow-up interviews. Study participants reflected the following characteristics: an equal division of people discharged for performance-related reasons and as a result of circumstances beyond their control (e.g. company closing); age range of 25 to 55 years; current job status of unemployed, "survival" employment, and satisfying employment; discharge position tenure ranging from 6 months to 20 years; extremely low and extremely high levels of satisfaction gained from the discharge position; and time period from discharge to date of study interviews ranging from approximately three months to eleven years.

Due to the potentially sensitive nature of disclosures, and the need for participants to feel comfortable speaking openly and honestly, interviews and observations data were recorded in field notes. Following each period of data collection, field notes were filled out and underwent an initial memoing and coding process. This was followed by an in-depth content analysis utilizing constant comparison methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as stated in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to generate categories and identify common themes. Member checks were conducted with all participants, and research outcomes were achieved as the result of participant negotiation, inter-coder agreement, and peer review.

### FINDINGS

Regardless of specific discharge contexts, participants described their experiences in terms of their actions, emotional "stages," ways of changing, coping behaviors, and concurrent life events. Their experiences were recounted in a loose chronology: what they experienced immediately following the discharge announcement, perspectives on their experience at the time of our interview, and struggles and change in between these two points.

The experience was described as an "interruption" that was traumatic and characterized by recurring periods of disorientation, emotional turmoil, unanticipated life changes, internal conflict concerning roles, perceptions of self, and relationships with others, and behavioral strategies used to "move beyond being fired." For some, the job loss precipitated divorce, a restructuring of social relationships, or a redefining of financial goals. For others there were increased thoughts of morbidity or suicide. Of greatest impact, however, were the emotional ramifications. One participant describes his experience in a way echoed by the others:

It really is a lot like death, yet it's not quite the same. I have flashes. Anger hits, then backs off. Stages seem to run together, overlap. It's scary. Self-confidence shaking. I'm anger-driven, bitter. It's also embarrassing. And frustrating. There's self-pity and depression. I have a sense that something has happened to me, but I'm not real clear on exactly what has changed.

"Up's and down's" characterized the days, weeks or months following the discharge, accompanied by a sometimes daily struggle to remain active rather than reactive or withdrawn. For some, this struggle was evidenced by a significant increase in sleep, in the amounts of alcohol consumed, or "a new need to make 'to do' lists, I think just to show myself there really was something to get up for each day." For one participant,

I had to fight, every day, to get past the depression. I had a real sense of worthlessness. I had to force myself to make calls. I painted the house. There was a lot of frantic activity that I think was to make up for not working. It made me feel like I was still contributing to my family. And it helped me avoid meeting and talking with people.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding the discharge, participants noted a marked hesitancy in decision-making and ability to take effective action, and a corresponding questioning of themselves and of their relationships with family and friends. Participants also chronicled an indeterminate period of self-reflection where life direction was "reassessed," where old roles and self-images were shed and a new "sense of place" in the world was perceived. One participants recounted,

One day I saw a group of people outside the unemployment office. My first thought was, if they really wanted a job they'd get one. That's how I always used to think, I've always been a little self-righteous. Then it hit me: that's me standing there! Somehow, that changed the whole way I viewed myself and others. I think I have more empathy now. It's easier for me to see other people's perspectives.

For all participants, there was ultimately "a turning point," "a release," or "sense of relief that I was being propelled to take action that I hadn't been able to take before." With this point of recognition came a reaffirmation or renewal of their sense of self that occurred apart from their acceptance of a new position. For some this came quickly, for others more slowly. The incidental knowledge generated through self-reflection and assessment was enhanced by interpersonal experiences, and "support of others" was named as a critical element of this development.

Though all participants described significant growth, positive changes they had made in themselves or their life situation, stronger relationships and increased self-knowledge that they tied to their experience of job loss, they also described episodes or "flashbacks" of anger or depression, self-doubt and lack of trust even several years after their discharge. The memory of the emotional intensity of the job loss experience also remains: "Even after

eleven years, now, when I think back on that time, I can feel the numbness. It all comes right back and it's like I'm right there again."

In spite of the turmoil and uncertainty, without exception the job loss was perceived as "a real learning experience," a time of growth, personal exploration, and decision-making. Participants focused their descriptions on incidental learning experiences and the impact this learning has had on their lives. Often this was described as "I wouldn't know what I do today, if that hadn't of happened," or "I wouldn't be who I am now, without that experience." Such learning includes the redefining of personal relationships, examination of values and roles, reflection on the foundations of self-worth and personal image, and the exploration of dreams, goals and interests.

Each participant engaged in formal and/or informal learning activities including self-directed learning projects, job search education and support groups, retraining as the result of a survival job, a return to higher education, and participation in career counseling. Reasons for participation were often instrumental in nature, as in retraining or to improve job search skills. However, the primary reason given for learning engagement was to "help me cope" and "help me make sense of what has happened." For each respondent, the learning experience was hampered by recurring periods of disorientation, depression, withdrawal and isolation, self-pity, anger, and a desire to "lick my wounds." Feelings of self-doubt, diminished self-worth, and sense of betrayal were identified as having the greatest impact on participants' ability to take effective action.

### DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

How is it we can understand the nature of change in adults following job loss? Findings revealed that the nature of job loss can be characterized by fragmentation, a sense of alienation, periods of self-examination, reflection and assessment, and the emergence of new perspectives concerning views of self and of others. These characteristics reflect the nature of job loss both in terms of the incidental learning involved and the transformative potential represented by the experience.

Incidental Learning in Job Loss. Participants identified the occurrence of incidental learning--that which occurs without conscious intention and as a byproduct of another interaction or activity (Marsick & Watkins, 1990)--as the predominant and most positive outcome of their job loss experiences. Cognitive acquisition was revealed as a secondary concern and reasons for participation emphasized the potential for help in "coping" and "making meaning." Though an awareness of instrumental needs brought participants to engage in organized learning experiences, participants focused on the incidental knowledge gained from either formal or informal learning activities. The degree of conscious awareness of this learning gives rise to questions concerning what is the true driving force for participation in adult learning activities by people experiencing job loss, and highlights the need for educators to stimulate this learning while meeting instrumental needs.

The Transformative Potential in Job Loss. The loose chronology of stages or phases described by participants is similar to the pathway of the transformational "journey" described by Daloz (1986). This study provides evidence of an evolving adaptive capacity

by participants as they strive to alter perspectives and to understand and accommodate the demands of their new life situation. Study participants had to question their basic assumptions and expectations of themselves in their diverse roles, to see how these perspectives perhaps constrained their views of themselves, and worked to create new, more inclusive perspectives. The initial shock and disorientation experienced immediately following the discharge announcement can be viewed as the struggle to assimilate their experience, which continued to manifest itself through on-going depression, withdrawal, and lowered self-esteem. This turmoil drove them to either reject the experience, or to begin to change their perspective to accommodate the experience. Such a revision of meaning perspective can be explained by the theory of perspective transformation and serves to corroborate the work of Mezirow and the transformational process. While instrumental needs may drive the learner to engage in organized learning activity, it is the transformational component that is viewed as most significant. Learners emerge with not only new knowledge and competency, but with new foundations of self-image, a new connectedness with others, and more inclusive, discriminating perspectives.

This study diverges from the work of Mezirow, however, in terms of the transformative process. Mezirow (1991) presents perspective transformation in hierarchical terms, moving stage-wise from a disorienting dilemma to a new framework of operation. While this current study identifies similar patterns of response, it presents a recursive process in which a sense of disorientation, self-examination, reflection, and exploration continues in a cyclical manner, decreasing in emotional intensity but continuing in many respects even beyond the point of resolution and achievement of new meaning. This finding is similar to that of Taylor (forthcoming), who identifies the process of transformation in intercultural competency to be recursive rather than hierarchical.

Clearly the incidence of involvement in organized learning following job loss, and the evidence that transformative learning is occurring within this context, carries significant implications for the adult educator working to improve the quality of the learning experience. Facilitation of adult learning needs to include guided reflection, stimulation of personal insight, and assurance that the learner will not only survive her or his developmental journey, but come to embrace its adventures wholeheartedly. We are called to provide an intuitive mix of support, challenge, and vision for the adult learner. Because of the fragmentary and alienating nature of job loss, there is an increased need to bring a sense of cohesiveness to the learning experience. The learner's strong need to "make meaning" of his or her experience, and to give practical application to the experience and create new direction to his or her life, suggests the importance of making learning immediately relevant while building on past experiences, and establishing an environment where learners feel safe to explore and express their struggles and new insights.

This study reveals that in spite of the negative consequences of job loss there lies the potential for substantial, transformative change in the lives of the participants. The nature and characteristics of the learning experiences, particularly incidental knowledge, appear to have a profound impact on the individual, perhaps influencing a person long after movement to a new life situation has been made. Adult educators can differentially impact the eventual



outcomes of the job loss experience by assisting these learners in their struggle to renew a sense of self-worth and achieve new meaning and understanding to their lives.

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## TOWARD RECOVERING AND RECONSTRUCTING ANDRAGOGY

David Little

**Abstract:** Emerging outlines for a reconstruction of andragogy are put forth. The situated activity stream of cultural psychology is initially explored and later connected to the Frankfurt stream of critical sociology with the intent to uncover a more robust construct of learning that holds potential for preserving the notion of a self-directed learner that is central to andragogy while at the same time superseding it with a conception of development within which learning is seen to occur as a culturally initiated, interpersonal process that is subsequently influenced through an intrapersonal process grounded in the somatics of the person.

Andragogy, one of the touchstones of modern adult education, has come under critical analysis from several perspectives. Some of the more trenchant critiques are leveled from the perspective of the new sociology, as education writ large continues to be examined under the microscope of critical sociology. Although these critiques have captured the gestalt of certain of the adult education professorate, the promise that these advances in the field of critical sociology hold for a reconceptualization of adult education has not been realized (Brookfield, 1993). Recent developments within the subdiscipline of cultural psychology appear to hold promise for a reconceptualization of andragogy that incorporates the macro level of analysis and a normative concern for the fate of humankind in technocratic society offered by critical sociology, and a microlevel of analysis and a reconstructed vision of learning grounded in the dialectical relationship between the person and society, and nature.

The original theoretical base for andragogy was Rogerian humanistic psychology, a phenomenologically grounded platform that takes into account the value of each individual's story as a potential contribution to a richer understanding of the essence of human social life and Lewinian group dynamics that recognizes the day-to-day functions that make possible collaborative efforts within a human community. The potential research vista for transforming andragogy proposed here is thought to preserve the notion of the self-directed learner with its emphasis on individual narrative and participation in small group life but at the same time recognize the broader social and cultural dynamics that contextualize and influence the construction of social reality.

### Cultural Psychology

Starting from the perspective of culturally valued activities rather than presumed psychological processes, cultural psychologists argue that culture, as historically accumulated systems of designs for living, has to be made a fundamental constituent of psychological theories of human nature. The orienting view here is one in which the social nature of cognition is stressed with psychological processes such as attention, perception, memory and thinking and affect seen as being distinct but not separate and organized by cultural artifacts that affect our material but in addition our ideational lives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This rudimentary perspective on cultural psychology is derived from Berman, J. (ed.). (1990) *Cross-cultural perspectives Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* 1989. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Chaiklin, S and Lave J. (eds.). (1993) *Understanding practice Perspectives on activity and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Resnick, L., Levine, J., and Teasley, D (eds.). (1991) *Perspectives on socially shared cognition*. Wash. D.C.:

## Cultural Artifacts

The term cultural artifacts, as employed here, incorporates technical as well as social tools and the narratives that underpin them. Human beings are envisaged as being able to modify their environment by creating these artifacts and transmitting accumulated modifications to subsequent generations through stories, maxims, theories and algorithms conveyed through human language (Cole 1989).

The important point here for educators is that as these artifacts are passed on from generation to generation, during the process of cultural newcomers acquiring them, these artifacts are thought to change. On this view learning is seen to occur initially and involuntarily from the outside in and subsequently, volitionally, from the inside out as a process of critique. Learning from the outside in represents the view that human action cannot be fully understood from the intrapersonal perspective. Action must be situated within a cultural world that persons construct and negotiate with each other. Learning from the inside out represents the perspective of the person as "a bounded, unique more or less integrated, motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action, organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against such other wholes and against a social and natural background" (Bruner, 1990 p114).

## Narratives

On the cultural psychology view of consciousness, it is thought that cognitive processes such as attention, perception, memory and thinking are organized by narratives and that affect influences our acceptance or rejection of these narratives. Narrative thought, with its inherent dialectical logic and concern with contradiction, is seen to be genetically prior to purposive-rational thought embedded in analytic logic and preceded by somatic intelligence or expressive critique grounded in the affect. By affect is meant a primordial way of knowing that is located partially in a natural attunedness to others that is one of the bases for our entry into meaning (Bruner 1990). This aspect of cultural psychology alone holds potential implications for the instruction of adult learners in regard to the narrative that underpins the content under consideration as well as the conflicts and associated somatic intelligence inherent in their own stories that hold transformative potential.

Cultural narratives, referred to as canonical stories or folk psychology, can be juxtaposed with exceptional stories or a person's narrative as a means of portraying the dialectical relationship between the person and society that when mediated, is thought to be a fulcrum for social change. On the one hand canonical stories depict how we should act in society as a whole and in particular within societal institutions. Exceptional stories on the other hand convey why we are not able to precisely enact the canonical story.<sup>2</sup>

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American Psychological Association, Wertsch, J. (1985) *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
Wertsch, J. (1991) *Voices of the mind*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

<sup>2</sup> The concepts of a canonical story or folk psychology and exceptional stories capture the notion of the lifeworld by which persons organize their experience in, knowledge about and transactions with the social world. This negotiation of meaning under conditions of felicity is explicated in chapter 2 Folk Psychology, pp33-36 in Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Society requires a generally acceptable narrative that focuses our cognitive processes of attending, perceiving, remembering and thinking and in so doing makes it possible for human beings to engage in collaborative, communal action that ensures the reproduction of society and the survival of the species. Human beings are seen as unique and in quest of self-identity. They are chafed by the cultural narrative. They suffer as they yearn to actualize their unfulfilled historically constituted capacities as human beings and in so doing manifest the potential for transforming society.

As part of the theoretical underpinnings of cultural psychology, the role that cultural artifacts — narratives in particular — play in the reproduction and transformation of society is a construct that holds the potential for preserving the above-mentioned staples of andragogy such as self-directed, autonomous, independent learners and their exceptional narratives while at the same time superseding them with a more complex form that casts learners as interdependent persons acting in the world through the mediation of the conflict between their exceptional voices and the multivoicedness of the social milieu.

### **Situated Activity**

A new paradigm for researching learning is emerging around the problem of context. Most learning is seen to occur within the natural surround or culture with formal learning in school seen as extremely important but comprising a very minor portion of learning and if not connected to the wider social milieu, of dubious value. Within this paradigm, learning is seen to be an aspect of culturally, historically situated activity (Chaiklin and Lave, 1993).

Situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991), a stream of research within the situated activity research paradigm is of particular interest for purposes of reconstructing andragogy. Within it, learning is portrayed from the perspective of engagement in a community of practice. That is, socially located groups of persons working collaboratively to solve practical problems such as the care of the elderly, the maintenance of highways, the nurturing of athletic teams and so on. The development of the community as well as the participants is seen to be influenced by a continuity-displacement contradiction between old-timers and newcomers.

The experience and stories of old-timers are seen to be initially encountered in a community of practice characterized by benign neglect and minimal responsibility and power coupled with high social interaction with peers. Although apparently restricted to busy work, participants eventually migrate to more responsible activities when the time is ripe. Upon being successful in a given aspect of the practice, they aspire to become experts and in so doing alter the power relationships and hence the social organization.

Each of the social roles of status subordinate, learning practitioner, sole responsible agent in a "minor" part of the performance and aspiring expert, thought to underpin the process of the development of competence, call for a particular configuration of responsibility, power and social interaction. They



hold the potential to contribute to a more robust conceptualization of the process of andragogy.<sup>3</sup>

### Critical Sociology

As a subdiscipline, critical sociology can be characterized by its normative concern with the fate of humankind in technocratic society and by its moral theories aimed at ameliorating asymmetrical power relationships. As such it holds great potential for excavating and reconstructing the nascent Unitarian-Universalist spiritual foundations of andragogy.

### Frankfurt Critical Theory

Contemporary German critical theory is particularly appealing for purposes of reconstructing andragogy in that it does not employ a conspiracy orientation toward the problem of the reduction of asymmetrical power relationships in society but rather a macro theory of how societies and individuals learn. Habermas (1984, 1985) in breaking with the consciousness/commodity paradigm and switching to a linguistically mediated theory of communication is able to abolish the notion of false consciousness and sublate it with one of fragmented consciousness and communicative action within which human beings are seen to be capable of employing several types of prelinguistically rooted intelligences.

The narrative that underpins Habermas' critical theory is one that casts human development as an ongoing evolution of somatic intelligence, the primordial touchstone of both nonhuman and human primates — aesthetic-expressive discourse and dramaturgical action. His story of human development is one in which narrative intelligence — moral interpretive discourse and normatively regulated action — evolves as part of the advent of human primate being and is genetically prior to the development of scientific intelligence — purposive rational discourse and teleological action — with linguistic intelligence — explicative discourse and language analysis — the latest intelligence to flower.

The critique is that over the history of the species, as a result of cumulative human error, science has become scientism crowding out an already weakened moral interpretive thought and action that had been increasingly desensitized as the Christian narrative progressively denigrated human primate's animal propensities thereby disembodimenting rationality. Through explicative discourse, human beings are able to interrogate their discourses and detect imbalances in their employment of human intelligences that create and maintain asymmetrical power relationships thought to inhibit the ongoing development of equitable, fair and humane social arrangements. Even when subjected to "the critique of ideology critique" attack, its primordial foundations make Frankfurt Critical Theory resistant to the postmodernist virus.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For an extremely lucid introduction to the theoretical underpinnings of situated learning as an approach to understanding the relationships among learning and development and education see W.F. Hanks' foreword to Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1990) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>4</sup> For an elaboration of somatic intelligence as the kynical apparent opposite of cynical thought and as an antidote to the modernist dilemma of an overdetermination of intellectual being see Sloterdijk, P. (1987) *Critique of cynical reason*. Trans. by M. Eldred. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Chapter 5 In Search of Lost Cheekiness, 101-128.

Habermas' critical theory could be employed to reconstruct andragogy in two ways. Its notion of aesthetic-expressive critique, an extraverbal, noncognitive mode of rational thought and action grounded in the soma, could be employed to flesh out the underdeveloped moral dimensions of andragogy by imbuing it with a bio-spiritual dimension. While The Theory of Communicative Action itself could be employed to extricate andragogy from its present limitations as a theory based in phenomenological and social psychology.

### **Sociohistorical School of Cultural Psychology**

Founded by Vygotsky, Luria and Leontev in the mid-1920's, the sociohistorical school of cultural psychology rests on the central thesis that the structure and development of human psychological processes are determined by humanity's historically developing, culturally mediated, practical activity (Cole, 1989). Development is posited as occurring on three distinct but not separate planes, the phylogenetic, sociohistorical and ontogenetic in dialectical relationships that provide a conception of human thought and action that avoids the excesses of biological and cultural determinism. The employment of tools and in particular psychological tools such as language are portrayed as the mediating factor in the development of higher mental functioning (Wertsch, 1985).

Based in part on critical theory, this view of development is congruent with the Habermasian notions of a multi-intelligence, rationality and the ongoing critique and reconstruction of society as human beings go about life's everyday activities. Its value for the proposed potential research vista lies in the articulation of the role of the person in mediating biological and cultural influences on lifelong learning and development, something underdetermined in andragogy.

What is of particular interest is the work being done in the area of nonformal semiotics and linguistics and psychology (Wertsch 1991) where notions such as dialogicality, heterogeneity of voices, ventriloquation, insubordination, interference, parody and the functional dualism of texts are employed to conceptualize action mediated by speech. The sociohistorical school, as represented by Wertsch, like Habermasian critical sociology is able, through the construct of heterogeneity of voice and the privileging of certain voices, to circumvent the conspiracy orientation. These lines of conceptualization hold promise for a more robust understanding of the dialogic communicative exchange thought to characterize the interaction of adult education participants.

### **Conclusion**

Recent advances in our understanding of cultural artifacts — particularly in the case of narratives — and our understanding of situated learning — a particular perspective on situated activity — generated within the subdiscipline of cultural psychology elaborate the process of the development of competence through engagement in communities of practice, and replace conspiracy theory with a notion of continuity-displacement contradiction as an explanation for ideology critique. These advances have the potential for shedding additional light on longheld conceptions of adult learners as response-able persons practicing in the world, enacting several social roles simultaneously and being imbued with a propensity for collaboration.

Similar advances in critical sociology enhance our understanding of the process and outcomes of the historical growth and development of society in such a way as to downplay conspiracy and punishment as central factors in a theory of growth by emphasizing learning from cumulative error realized through a recovery and reclamation of our primordial spiritual heritage.

An integration of findings in both of these subdisciplines would provide a microanalytic perspective for understanding the small group locus of adult learning and instruction and a macroanalytic perspective for understanding the large group locus of lifelong learning and lifelong education.

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## SELF-ASSESSMENT: AN ESSENTIAL SKILL FOR LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Catherine Marienau, Ph.D.

**Abstract:** Using qualitative methodology, the study examined perspectives of working professionals concerning the role and value of self-assessment in their professional lives. Content analysis revealed six major themes concerning the benefits of self-assessment in relation to workplace learning, workplace performance, and personal and professional development.

**Purpose & Context:** The purpose of the study was to explore, in open-ended fashion, what practicing professionals see as the important outcomes of engaging in self-assessment, and what connections they make between self-assessment and learning and performance in the workplace.

The study involved graduate students in the Master of Arts Program in Integrated Professional Studies in the School for New Learning at DePaul University. Representing diverse fields, students design a focus area related to their career field and use their workplace as the primary laboratory for learning and application. In addition to their individualized studies, students participate--in clusters of about 15 members--in a Common Curriculum consisting of seven short, intensive courses in topics relevant to practitioners. A set of five Liberal Learning Skills, which include facility in self-assessment and self-managed learning, undergird both components of the curriculum. Assessment sessions, with self-assessment as the main theme, are held for each cluster four times during in the program. Students reflect on how they are integrating the liberal learning skills with their professional studies and examine the results of applying their learning in the workplace.

**Methodology:** The research was exploratory in nature and qualitative in design. The period for data collection was from December 1991 through February 1993. Data were collected from graduating students ( $n=30$ ) and from currently enrolled students in three different clusters (total  $n=50$ ). Primary methods included written responses to open-ended questions and focus group interviews. As reported by Caffarella and O'Donnell (1991), focus group interviews are "in-depth interactive discussion groups yielding qualitative data" (p. 19). Data collection and analysis were intermingled over four rounds, stemming from an initial set of open-ended questions. Themes and patterns were established both within and across clusters, with only those patterns holding across two or more clusters being reported as findings.

The currently enrolled students ( $n=50$ ), from three different clusters, were in their first year of the program. All 50 students volunteered, upon invitation, to participate in the study. Three open-ended questions formed the base of the study: (1) What does self-assessment mean to you? How do you define it? What does it involve?; (2) What value, if any, do you place on self-assessment?; and, (3) What links, if any, do you make between self-assessment and your learning and performance at work?



Over a 12-month period, three to four focus group interviews were held with each of the three clusters, each lasting approximately one and one-half hours, in the context of regularly scheduled Assessment sessions. The interviews were tape-recorded with permission of the participants. Written responses to open-ended questions and surveys were also included as part of the data collection.

Through content analysis of the first round of data, general themes and patterns were identified for each cluster. This information was fed back to respondents in the second round in the forms of open-ended questions and survey for purposes of verifying patterns, ranking the importance of patterns, and stimulating other areas to be explored. A theme identified in one cluster was cross-checked with at least one other cluster to discriminate idiosyncratic from common patterns across clusters. During the next two rounds of data collection, existing themes and patterns were examined in more depth with each cluster and consistency of patterns was sought across clusters.

Graduating students (n=30) were asked to write one essay, at the point of graduation, concerning the links they saw between self-assessment and their learning and performance at work. A content analysis was done of their responses as a separate group. Their patterns were compared to those resulting from the cross-cluster analysis.

**Findings:** Fifty percent or more of the responses within each cluster were required to establish a pattern. Reported findings include only those patterns which were validated by at least two of the three clusters. Six themes were drawn from the participants' comments concerning what they saw to be the benefits or outcomes of engaging in self-assessment in its relation to learning and performance at work. In addition, participants offered definitions of self-assessment.

**Definition/Themes.** Over 75 percent of all respondents defined self-assessment as an "internal process of evaluating oneself." Fifty percent of the respondents also defined self-assessment as the "ability to evaluate oneself objectively." The six major themes of self-assessment were drawn from participants' comments. They are clustered into three major categories: learning at work; performance at work; and, personal and professional development.

#### **Learning at Work: Self-assessment increases receptivity to learning**

Participants identified seven specific dimensions of receptivity to learning seen as having been influenced by self-assessment. The most important dimensions were that self-assessment has made them (1) "more reflective on experience," and has helped them become (2) "more open to feedback from others." Through the interaction of reflection and feedback, respondents reported learning that one (3) "can really learn from mistakes." Respondents reported that self-assessment changed their perspectives on learning by helping them become (4) "more open to different ways of learning," and (5) "more aware of [their] own cognitive processes." They also reported that self-assessment has (6) "increased [their] motivation to keep learning" and made them (7) "more oriented to outcomes."

"I've been stimulated to be more of a 'learner' in work activities and have pushed myself to be more introspective..."

"Self-assessment gives me permission to be an eternal student. It lightens the load I once carried--a feeling that I should know it all by now."

"My increasing ability to engage in self-assessment has become the strong foundation upon which all other learning has been built."

#### **Learning at Work: Self-assessment develops and sharpens work-related learning skills**

As a result of their engagement in self-assessment, respondents identified eight learning skills that they saw as particularly relevant to their work contexts. Most importantly, respondents said that self-assessment has helped them (1) set and achieve their goals, involving "assessing [their] progress toward specific goals," "setting realistic goals," "staying focused and on track," and, "identifying new goals." Another learning skill respondents rated as most important was that self-assessment has helped them (2) improve their interpersonal skills, which they highlighted as (3) seeking feedback about their ways of relating with and to others, and (4) listening to others. Other work-related learning skills that were strengthened by self-assessment included (5) "critical reflection on experience," and (6) "critical thinking" as it relates to (7) "problem-solving" and (8) "decision-making."

"Self-assessment has caused me to be much more reflective in using experience to improve my perspective and skills. I listen better to others..."

"More than any other effect, self-assessment has made an impact on my personal interaction."

"Most importantly, I have become a better listener, seeking out the ideas of others and offering frequent feedback."

#### **Performance at Work: Self-assessment fosters greater reliance on internal criteria for judging own performance**

Respondents identified four dimensions concerning their personal criteria for making judgments about their own performance at work. An especially important dimension was the respondents' claim that (1) "one's criteria are influenced by one's values." The values cited by the majority of respondents included commitments to "quality," to "integrity," to "making a difference," and to "honesty." Thus, respondents reported seeking (2) "congruence between one's values and one's performance." With regard to standards, respondents noted that their (3) "own past performance sets a standard;" at the same time, they have learned to (4) "incorporate external measures and standards" into their judging process. The external measures include: feedback from others, e.g., clients, co-workers, superiors; specific departmental objectives; the organization's view of the significance of what has been accomplished; and, standards of practice in the profession.

"In the context of work, the standards by which I assess myself are self-generated usually to reach and surpass mine and the organization's expectations....I rely on my superior and peers for essential feedback and internalize this information. However, their standards belong to them, not me."

"The recognition of values, I feel, makes it easier to assess myself. The values seem to give a direction in which to go."

"For me, my key standards relate to how I want to be viewed by myself and others as a quality contributor/performer in some given area....My self-assessment and improvement cycle (plan/do/assess/reflect/plan again/re-do/etc.) is an ongoing 'doing and checking' set against my personal goals and the 'looking glass' reaction received from others."

#### **Performance at Work: Self-assessment fosters responsibility for one's work**

Respondents identified eight elements concerning how self-assessment fostered their sense of responsibility for their work. Respondents said the most important element was that self-assessment has helped them (1) "develop a critical view of [their] own work." This included being able to (2) "identify the need for corrective action." Respondents reported feeling (3) "more accountable for [their] own actions" and (4) having "greater ownership of the results" of their work. Both explicitly and implicitly, respondents talked about self-assessment as a means for (5) "increasing [their] motivation" to do their work well and for (6) "improving [their] discipline and work habits." As a result, respondents reported that self-assessment has helped them (7) "improve [their] functioning as a member of the group" and (8) "improve [their] functioning as a manager and leader."

"My supervisors have noticed and supported my own assessment of my increased ability to work independently, consult with co-workers in an appropriate manner, and use co-workers as resources and employ teamwork."

"I find myself examining situations as they happen or soon after. I feel self-assessment has made my work more interesting because I am able to see and learn more."

"The ability to self-assess and gain insight into my skills and areas that require additional growth has had a positive effect on my performance at work."

#### **Personal and Professional Development: Self-assessment increases awareness of self**

Many participants indicated that they tended not to separate personal and professional considerations with respect to self-assessment. Respondents identified nine aspects of self awareness that have been influenced by self-assessment.

Most importantly, self-assessment has helped respondents (1) "identify areas for change" in both their professional and personal lives. Another significant aspect was that self-assessment has helped them (2) "feel more in charge of their personal and professional life." Other notable aspects were an (3) "increase in self-acceptance" and (4) "self-confidence" in one's abilities. Relatedly, respondents reported (5) "a sense of increased competence," particularly in relation to their work. Respondents also highlighted gaining (6) "more awareness of personality traits," their own and others. Significant shifts in beliefs and in the meanings they ascribed to certain concepts were also important to respondents. Among the (7) changes in beliefs promoted by self-assessment were "letting go of the belief that there is the 'right' way" and recognizing that "considerable learning can come from making mistakes." Respondents also noted that they (8) have developed new meanings for concepts such as "excellence" and "success" which tended to be referenced more internally than externally. Finally, respondents reported a (9) "deepening

commitment to [their] own development."

"My performance as a professional is much less inhibited and guarded by virtue of the fact that self-assessment has revealed someone that I like and accept."

"As a result of doing self-assessment, I no longer view making mistakes as a character flaw."

"Instead of looking for the universal 'right' way to do things, I now feel confident in trusting my own instincts to perform my career responsibilities."

"Self-assessment is gradually giving me the sense that success doesn't mean doing everything perfectly all the time; but rather that one can grow and improve through setbacks."

#### **Personal and Professional Development: Self-assessment enhances a sense of direction in life**

It was noted in the theme of "work-related learning skills," that self-assessment has helped respondents set and achieve goals. For many, self-assessment also has helped give form and direction to their life overall. For them, self-assessment has been a way to (1) "reflect on progress on one's life journey." In the process, they are able to (2) "confirm directions" and (3) "evaluate new directions."

"I came face to face with a discovery that has since caused me to fundamentally rethink my whole role...to come to terms with my own limitations."

"Notwithstanding my professional development, which has been significant, my personal development has deeply influenced my professional abilities by altering my self-image which has impacted not only how I see myself individually but also my self-perception as a practitioner."

#### **Summary & Discussion**

This study explored what practicing professionals perceive as the value or benefits of engaging in self-assessment and the relationship of self-assessment to learning and performance in the workplace. A clear finding is that practicing professionals have found self-assessment to be an essential and powerful tool for their learning and development, in both professional and personal contexts. Perhaps most striking is the extent to which they have identified key elements which are found in the literature on organizational learning. In addition to bridging the personal and professional for the individual, it appears that self-assessment serves as a significant link between individual and organizational learning. One of Kline and Saunders' (1993) principles for a learning organization is to "Teach the process of self-evaluation: As we perceive ourselves more realistically, we become better able to guide our own learning and thus continuously improve our work" (p. 17).

With regard to continuous learning, both individual and organizational, Watkins and Marsick (1993), Schon (1983) and others accentuate the ability to reflect critically on one's experience and behavior. Sheckley, Lamdin and Keeton (1993) include critical reflection as one of the essential work-related learning skills that "employers want and employees need" (p. 112). Watkins and Marsick (1993) emphasize that critical reflection includes



"taking the time to look deeply at one's situation to identify values, assumptions, and beliefs that cause us to interpret the situation as we do (p. 33). The capacity for critical reflection on experience is represented explicitly in three of the six themes that emerged in this study--"receptivity to learning," "work-related learning skills," and "responsibility for one's work"--and is implicit in the others. The notion of examining one's values, assumptions and beliefs is prominent in the themes of "self-awareness" and "internal criteria."

Also reflected in the themes of "receptivity to learning" and "self-awareness" is the notion of learning from mistakes. Argyris has expressed concern that successful professionals "have never learned how to learn from failure" (1993, p. 178). One of Kline and Saunders' (1993) principles is to "view mistakes as stepping stones to continuous learning" (p. 17).

The significance of the findings lies not in any one category or theme but in the strong interrelationship among the categories and themes. These interrelationships need to be explored toward the possibility of developing a model of self-assessment for adult learners appropriate for their roles as learners and workers.

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## PORTRAIT OF A LEARNING ORGANIZATION: STORIES FROM EARLY ADOPTERS

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**Abstract:** This article tells the stories of selected learning organizations. The authors first describe their research and lay out a set of four lenses by which to understand organizational learning theories: experiential, structural, informing, and cultural. They then examine the way in which the researched companies positioned their initiatives, built new capacity, implemented their strategies, and transferred learning within the company. The authors conclude by tying these findings back to their conceptual framework and by discussing implications for practice and for the use of this conceptual framework.

The literature offers conceptual frameworks for the learning organization (Dixon, in press; Redding & Catalanello, 1994; Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993), but less is known about what adopting organizations understand by this concept, how they begin this effort, and which features they focus upon in implementation. This research was carried out to capture the stories of researched companies from the point of view of implementers (Catalanello, Dixon, Marsick, O'Neil, & Watkins, 1993). In this article, we first describe the study. We then develop a framework for organizational learning which we use as a lens through which to view these findings. We present stories from the findings, tie them in with the framework, and conclude with implications for practice and research.

The study was conducted for the Learning Organization Network, American Society for Training & Development. A convenience sample of 18 interviewees in 17 companies was drawn that was intentionally biased toward the phenomenon we sought to describe. The sample included five high technology companies, three health-related suppliers of goods and services, two government agencies, two manufacturing companies, and five service agencies. We designed and field tested a phone interview guide that addressed the following questions: description of the organization, description of the initiative, history and triggers, current or anticipated outcomes. Analysis was conducted by a joint research team of four people using content analysis. We initially used a set of continua based on themes from the data and on the literature on the topic. The four continua include: whether the change effort was a single strategy or an integrated effort; whether the impact was localized or systemic; whether the learning was single or double loop; and whether competence was being developed primarily in individuals or additionally in teams or larger systems.

Under the aegis of organizational learning, company initiatives were so varied that the researchers questioned whether all were referencing the same phenomenon. Some activities were localized within a single unit, while others were systemic; some involved a one-time event, while others were integrated into ongoing activities; some were single-loop and others double-loop; some were focused at the individual level, while others addressed team and even whole system competence. The researchers came to understand this variety as representing differing lenses through which organizational learning itself was framed.

It is not necessary for individuals to hold a learning theory in conscious awareness for it to influence their choice of learning activities. Yet, individuals do hold distinguishing beliefs about what is important to learn and how learning should take place. In effect, they hold a tacit theory that mediates their learning. We propose a similar tacit theory at the system

level that mediates the transformational processes that an organization acts, and thus influences the learning outcomes that are achieved, that is embodied in four lenses: experiential, structural, informing, and cultural.

### Framework for Understanding Organizational Learning

At the heart of learning organizations is the assumption that organizations can learn. This metaphor has frequently been criticized because it attributes individual, personal characteristics to abstract systems that are collections of individuals who work together. Theorists debate whether or not organizations learn; some assert that individuals act as agents of learning for the organization. Many theorists adopt a modified stimulus-response model to explain the way in which individuals collectively interact. This model derives from behaviorist learning theory which originally described learning as an almost automatic response to environmental stimuli. Cyert and March (1963), for example, noted that organizations prefer certain states. When external disturbances shock the system, individuals make decisions that change the system's state. Organizations learn when individual decision rules are understood and used organizationally. Subsequent organizational learning theorists modify March, and in so doing, add to our understanding of how responses of individuals or organizations are influenced by cognitive filters (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Hedberg, 1981; Meyer, 1982; Senge, 1990).

Watkins, Dixon, and Marsick have developed a set of lenses to understand what happens when a transition is made from looking at organizational learning as an *outcome* to describing a set of proactive *processes* to create a learning organization. In our framework, organizational learning is also a mediated response to a trigger in the environment. The trigger can either be imposed or self-generated, i.e., an environmental jolt, challenge, new vision, or other impetus for change. The response is mediated by one of four lenses that represent a focus of intervention (Figure 1): building capacity through learning from experience, alterations in structural relationships, changes in making meaning of information, and transformation of culture.

**Figure 1: Four Intervention Lenses for Understanding Organizational Learning**

| Lens         | Transformational Process                                                             | Organizational Learning Outcomes                                                                                     |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Experiential | Deliberately engaging organizational issues to both resolve, and learn through, them | Enhanced individual, group, and organizational capacity for innovation and learning                                  |
| Structural   | Changing relationships among organizational members                                  | Greater system use of members' innovation and learning capability                                                    |
| Informing    | Translating information resources into collective meaning                            | Improved organizational ability and speed in generating, transferring, storing, understanding, and using information |
| Cultural     | Altering patterns of individual interactions and concomitant system interaction      | Transformation of organizational vision, values, mental models                                                       |

The experiential lens is the creation and accumulation of collective knowledge and skills that build organizational capacity for change. These theorists presuppose that individuals learn from their experience (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963; Revans, 1982), and that their collective learning and action can result in organizational learning, given the right conditions. The dilemma faced by those who enter the learning organization with this lens is that individuals do not always use their individual learning for the benefit of the larger

group. The limits to organizational experiential learning sometimes derive from the inability of individuals to move beyond their own learning, but more often, these limits derive from the way in which organizations are structured to contain the influence of individuals on others and the system as a whole.

The structural lens is an alteration in the overall system of relationships among people and the way in which they organize themselves for work away from rigid constraints and toward open systems (Meyer, 1982; Pedler, Burgoyne, and Boydell 1991). These theorists presuppose that by changing systems for interaction, the intrinsic motivation of people will be freed from artificial boundaries that constrain interaction among one another and rob the organization of the benefits of their participation. Structural theories overcome some of the limits of experiential theories in that they provide vehicles for sharing and acting upon individual insights gleaned from experience. However, structural theories are limited by the dilemma of the letter vs. the spirit of the law: the organization can mandate structures for participation, but it is harder to ensure that people will participate authentically or with enough interpersonal skill to ensure success.

Zuboff (1988) coined the term "informating" in contrast to automating to describe intelligent use of intelligent technology. The informating lens involves the way in which people make meaning of information, productively use their interpretations, and create the organization's memory. This frequently involves intelligent technology, but it also includes other means for acquiring, storing, retrieving, understanding, and using information (Dixon, 1992; Huber, 1991; Nevis, DiBella, & Gould, 1993). These theorists presuppose that by changing the way in which information is meaningfully used, they can influence long-term capacity for change. Ultimately, however, information systems are only as intelligent as the users that create and access them. As such, these theories are also limited by the letter vs. the spirit of the law invoked with respect to structural theories. As fully as this lens deals with meaning making, it does not address assumption levels that mediate the interpretation of meaning.

The cultural lens posits that reality is socially constructed and maintained, and that it is evidenced in norms, rules, rewards, and values. These theorists presuppose that by changing the culture and its underlying cognitive and affective determinants, they can influence both individual thinking/behavior as well as what Argyris and Schön (1978) often refer to as the behavioral social worlds that shape and reinforce individuals. Cultural theories overcome some of the limits of structural theories in that they address some of the obstacles that prevent people from participating authentically in new relationships and they build interpersonal competency through inquiry skills. However, cultural theories are limited by the slow pace at which cultures change and the intensive effort that individuals must make in digging below the surface for assumptions, beliefs, and values that influence them and the social realities that they construct. While it is possible to mandate some dimensions of external cultural change, and thus accelerate the process, much true change only comes by patient, long-term effort.

#### Stories from Early Adopters

O'Neil and Catalanello analyzed the strategies used when companies consciously tried to become learning organizations. They identified patterns in four categories: how the initiatives were positioned within the companies, what was done to build capacity through new skills and knowledge, which action steps were taken to implement the move toward a learning organization, and which support systems were used to sustain and transfer learning within the company.

Companies commonly positioned their strategies by engaging high level support. In nine of the 17 companies, the initiatives involved top executives. This high level support was very



often accompanied by creating a mission or vision that would clearly communicate what the initiative was to accomplish, for example, "a learning organization that is process managed, team centered and principle based" or a "purpose . . . to improve the quality of life." Probably because of similarities, overlap, or the strength of existing initiatives, six companies built their learning organization strategy on existing Total Quality Management (TQM) initiatives. Overall, similarities in positioning demonstrated the importance of strong, visible, clear support in undertaking a move towards a learning organization.

Initiatives required the building of new capacity at individual, team, and organizational levels. Seven companies began by addressing needs at the individual level. Four of these companies wanted to ensure that the learning people needed was available and took place; they spoke in terms of skill based training programs, competency development, and learning roadmaps. The other three companies focused more on the capacity to learn continuously, sometimes in conjunction with specific skills training, as the following quote illustrates: "learning must add value to the company; people have to learn to take risks, challenge prevailing ways of doing business."

Ten companies addressed learning at the team level, although it was not always clear how much of their focus was learning and how much of it was action. These companies also used teams as the most frequently observed action steps toward implementation. Three companies, for example, used Action Learning or Action Reflection Learning<sup>TM</sup>. Learning occurs while members solve real business problems under actual work conditions, or in the words of one proponent in the study, through "a process of learning by doing, reflecting upon what we have done, and making adjustments where necessary." Another respondent using teams explained the rationale for this choice: "Large-scale fundamental change can be leveraged through autonomous work teams." Another respondent likewise described the use of "seven or eight councils . . . (that) are responsible for finding best practices . . . and then develop ways to pass this learning on to others."

Three companies made changes in fundamental support structures as action steps toward implementation: communication processes, recruiting policies and procedures, compensation plans, appraisal systems, and reward and recognition systems. For example, in one company, "Early actions (by the CEO) included holding 4:1 discussions. These 4:1s grew into fireside chats with groups of 20-25 people to . . . share specifics about the learning organization initiative."

All companies took some planned steps to begin their initiative. Although they were still in the early stages of their work, eleven of these companies also had examined and implemented methods to sustain and transfer learning within their companies. The most frequent methods used were processes of reflection, increased communication, and electronic mail systems. A quote illustrates the first of these three: "So I think getting in the habit of doing that will start them to not just do things automatically, but be able to reflect and check their assumptions about what they are doing. . . And that will cascade down."

#### Linking the Company's Stories to the Conceptual Framework

In summary, although each company approached its initiative separately, there were enough commonalities found in their strategies to help managers begin to frame their own work in the area of creating a learning organization. Most initiatives were launched by a highly-placed or otherwise influential manager based on information gained through reading, consultants, or colleagues. Senge's (1990) ideas were often influential. The trigger typically was a major change event in the environment, which was often related to TQM. The concept was expressed through a significantly different vision, mission, and goal. Many initiatives were integrated change efforts with an intention to impact the system.

Nonetheless, the focus initially was often on individual capability development, although much attention was also paid to team learning. Communication became more central to success, and organizations created mechanisms to share learning across boundaries.

As a final step we look at how, and if, this portion of the practice of these companies fits with the lenses we created for understanding organizational learning. With respect to the first lens, that of experiential learning, a review of our companies' strategies shows the use of Action Learning and Action Reflection Learning™. These practices build the capacity of individuals and teams for learning from experience, and thereby, have the potential to influence the collective repertoire of knowledge and skills in the company. The structural organizational learning lens explains many of the practices in our companies. For example, six companies built their initiatives on established Quality initiatives for which change in structure is inherent. In addition, the creation of team structure was the most prevalent strategy used in the initiatives. The third lens, that of informing, is evident in new and/or improved strategies for transferring learning throughout the organization. In some cases, this involved methods that increased the ability of people to verbally communicate up, down, and across levels. In other cases, this was accomplished through effective use of technology. The fourth lens, that of culture, can be seen in the way in which many executives in this study reframed the way in which they looked at their companies. They saw their organizations emerging from the initiative with new values and principles. They encouraged the development of skills that would help people learn to take risks, challenge the prevailing ways of doing business, and engage in systemic thinking.

### Conclusions and Implications

Each successive lens in Figure 1 requires an increase in investment on the part of the organization, and a consequent increase in the amount of integration into the organization's fabric. This might explain the choices that organizations make about interventions. The experiential lens is perhaps most frequently found because, of the four lenses, interventions in this vein most closely parallel individual learning processes. Even when organizational learning is not highly intentional, companies recognize that the experience of their members adds value. The structural lens is a deliberate act on the part of the organization to focus on learning. As such, the company makes public its intent to function in new ways and makes changes in systems, policies, and procedures to support and catalyze learning. The informing lens often requires a dollar investment in technology to create access to system-wide data. It likewise demands a human investment in the development of members' expertise and an ongoing exchange with knowledge resources external to the organization (e.g., suppliers, customers, technology providers). Finally, while a number of organizations aim for cultural change, few have made the time and dollar investment required to significantly alter the culture. Culture will change over time. However, the work of Argyris and Schön (1978) suggests that culture is unlikely to change in the direction of increased learning. Unaided, organizations tend toward defensive routines that limit learning.

Use of any one of the above lenses necessarily excludes important dimensions of organizational learning embodied in the other lenses. We suggest that organizations must eventually adopt an integrated framework to promote full continuous learning at individual, team, and organizational levels. An integrated framework involves a mix of strategies from all four lenses, with an emphasis on proactive creation of learning outcomes. Senge's (1990) five disciplines are integrative: personal mastery which speaks to learning from experience, shared vision which transforms relationships, changed mental models which transform the culture, and team learning which is a means to collective meaning making based on shared information exchange. Thinking systemically, Senge's fifth discipline, is the glue that brings together these elements. Senge, however, looks more at organizational change than at learning. By contrast, Watkins & Marsick (1993) focus more on the learning dimensions of

change. Their recommended six action imperatives likewise encompass all four lenses: create continuous learning opportunities, promote inquiry and dialogue, encourage collaboration and team learning, create systems to capture and share learning, empower people toward a collective vision, and connect the organization to its environment.

We conclude that it may be possible to explain organizational learning within any given company by using several of the lenses in our framework although there is seldom enough data-based information to enable such an analysis. However, we also hypothesize that companies striving to become learning organizations are likely to lean in the direction of one or other framework based on characteristics of the industry, the company itself, and the initiator of the intervention.

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## **Ethnicity-Related Adult Education Cultural Diversity Programs: A Typology**

Larry G. Martin, Ph.D.

**Abstract:** Organizations that experience ethnicity-related problems often identify cultural diversity training as a solution. However, there are multiple approaches and perspectives to such programs and programmatic outcomes will vary considerably with the approach selected. A typology is presented which identifies five types of programs.

### **Introduction**

Cultural diversity as a social movement, particularly as it relates to race relations in the U.S., is at a crossroads. Almost daily, via the news media, we hear stories of racial strife that result from interracial conflict, miscommunication, and ignorance. Organizations that experience ethnicity-related problems often identify either education or training as a solution. As a result, ethnicity-related cultural diversity education and training programs are becoming an important aspect of organizational life for many employees in U.S. agencies and organizations, and they have implications for race-relations that extend beyond the workplace. However, the popularity of the programs, i.e., in terms of frequency of offerings, belie the fact that they are poorly understood. There are multiple approaches and perspectives to such programs and the outcomes experienced by an organization will vary considerably with the approach selected. This paper presents a conceptualization of diversity education and training programs which captures the variety of approaches currently being implemented in a variety of organizational settings.

### **The Rationale for Diversity Programs**

Ethnicity-related cultural diversity programs are often initiated in response to several imperatives that define interrelated trends and issues that are prominent in post-modernist U.S. society. A **demographic imperative** confronts most organizations and agencies. Demographers predict that in the next century, African Americans, Asians, and Latinos will outnumber whites in the U.S. Organizations can respond to this reality by either ignoring it and as a consequence use only a portion of their human resources, or they can face the inevitable challenge and learn to manage a diverse work force. Also, the U.S. labor pool is shrinking thereby creating more intense competition for talent. Many organizations have reacted by attempting to redefine old definitions of "fit" and are increasingly employing people from different ethnic and cultural origins (Fine, et al. 1990). However, once they have hired these individuals they are discovering that they must compete with other similar organizations to retain them and keep them motivated.

An **economic imperative** results from the fact that the significant increase in the populations of people of color also effects "market place" demands. According to the Population Reference Bureau, African Americans, Asians, and Latinos currently make up about 21 percent of the U.S. consumer base and they are expected to reach 25 percent by the year 2000. Minority markets now buy more than Canada or any of the other countries with which the U.S. trades. In 1990 they spent about \$424 billion and



they are expected to reach \$650 billion by the year 2000. A culturally sensitive, diverse work force enables organizations to better understand and serve these diverse customers: consumers, clients, students, patients, victims, constituents, parishioners, or others.

A **social imperative** is also a reality for society at large and a great many organizations. People of color are often cited among the poorest, least educated, more criminally inclined, and most victimized populations in the U.S. (Wilson, 1987 and Hacker, 1992). However, today's people of color are also much more likely than previous generations to celebrate their own individuality and uniqueness and to demand respect and equal treatment when they encounter mainstream institutions. In progressive organizations, valuing diversity and managing differences is not just EEO-driven, but supported strongly by management.

A **personal imperative** is an element in the new formula for management training. It suggests that individuals who have learned to function in diverse situations tend to develop superior cross-cultural communication skills, become better leaders, and develop better skills at giving and receiving feedback. Also, good management depends on effectively working with other people by understanding and appreciating differences in values and perspectives as well as simple differences of opinion (Morrison, 1992).

A **legal imperative** results from the fact that antidiscrimination laws have provided people of color access to educational institutions and occupations that were once closed to them because of blatant discrimination. While affirmative action legislation provided access to opportunities, it did little to address the underlying assumptions and stereotypes that plagued nontraditional employees and created barriers to advancement that persist today, e.g., people of color are viewed as inferior in intellect, training, and motivation (Morrison, 1992). As a consequence people of color have sought redress through the courts. However, discrimination lawsuits are monetarily expensive to the offending agencies and organizations, negatively impact market initiatives, and project to the community-at-large an unfriendly and/or hostile working and learning environment.

Although cultural diversity training programs are often initiated in response to one or more of these imperatives, the programs do not often accomplish the goals for which they were developed. Organizational initiatives seeking to remedy ethnicity-related organizational problems often fail to differentiate from among the many types of diversity educational and training options available to them.

### **Types of Programs**

In the past ethnicity-related diversity programs were employed by K-12 school systems to help the educational establishment to cope with the influx of students whose cultural orientations and languages differed substantially from the norms set by white mainstream culture. The programs that were developed differed substantially in terms of philosophical orientation and approaches to dealing with such students. Sleeter and Grant (1994) observed that Gibson in 1976 was among the first theoreticians to attempt to classify the different approaches to "multi-cultural education". She identified four approaches to the efforts of K-12 teachers and administrators to address the diverse needs of culturally different students. The authors acknowledged that Gibson's typology and another typology by Pratte in 1983 distinguished fairly well among the various approaches employed in the school systems. However, in their text they provide a more elaborate five-approach typology which included: the human capital theory of education

and society, human relations, single-group studies, multi-cultural education, and education that is multi-cultural and social reconstructionist.

In a similar vein, Morrison (1992) observed that several typologies describing the variety of approaches that organizational leaders have employed to deal with diversity-related issues were developed by Palmer in 1989 and Kim in 1991. Morrison's (1992) model incorporated the two previous models and briefly described five approaches to cultural diversity and their underlying assumptions: golden rule, assimilation, righting the wrongs, culture-specific, and multicultural.

The models presented above, and a review of the adult education literature on cultural diversity education and training programs suggest that five types of cultural diversity training programs are currently being implemented: assimilation/acculturation, cultural awareness, multi-cultural, ethno-centrist, and anti-racism. These types of programs will be described in regard to six variables: underlying assumptions, educational goal, clients, program content, mode of delivery, and criteria for success.

#### **Assimilation/Acculturation**

Assimilation/Acculturation programmatic efforts are designed to help people of color and language minorities to improve academic participation and performance via deficiency reduction. They regard the existing culture of American society and(or) the sponsoring organization as basically good and just. Therefore they seek to help minority students to reduce deficiencies that may result from impoverished conditions or deficient cultures in order to improve their cognitive skills, information analysis and processing skills, language skills, and values to the levels required to function adequately in the existing culture. Sleeter and Grant (1994) argue that this approach is based on the "human capital theory of society" which holds that education is a form of investment. The individual acquires skills and knowledge that can be converted into income when used to acquire employment. This theory suggests that the poor are poor mainly because they have not developed their human capital. Poverty and inequality result from insufficient opportunities for people of color to acquire the knowledge and skills society needs.

The content of these programs is often derived from discipline-based knowledge and is therefore often irrelevant to the students' background experiences. However, the content attempts to remediate the learners' gaps in basic skills and knowledge. These programs are most often delivered via: adult basic education and adult secondary education classes that target low-literate learners, English as a Second Language classes for second language learners, postsecondary basic skills classes for people of color who fail to meet the entrance requirements for specific classes and programs, and other remedial programmatic efforts. These programs are considered successful if they result in improved retention, increased academic (and academically-related) performance, and promotion of people of color within the existing structure and culture of society and sponsoring organizations.

#### **Cultural Awareness**

Cultural awareness programs are among the most popular efforts that are usually linked to diversity training. They are designed to promote feelings of unity, tolerance, and acceptance within the existing organizational culture and structure. Sleeter and Grant (1994) identified these efforts with the "human relations approach", whereas

Morrison (1992) identified them as consistent with the "golden rule approach" to diversity. Both texts agree that this approach seeks to: 1) help individuals communicate with, accept, and get along with people who are different from themselves, 2) reduce stereotypes that individuals have about people, and 3) help individuals to feel good about themselves and about the groups of which they are members, without putting others down in the process. Some proponents of this approach relate it directly to the study of prejudice and intergroup hostility (Sleeter and Grant, 1994). They argue that because so many complex factors, e.g., home background, social situations, health, income, intelligence, and aspirations, affect human interaction and human relationships, this approach must take into account each individual's total personality.

Advocates of this approach believe that the attitudes and feelings people have about themselves and others should be targeted in order to replace tension and hostility with acceptance and care. They argue that the values promulgated via this approach should be fostered in everyone in order to make our democracy work. Therefore the clients for these efforts are usually everyone in the organization, with special efforts directed at straight white American males (SWAMs). The programs attempt to provide content that includes: a) examining the social groups of which one is a member and the views society has of these groups, b) examining friendship groups, the meaning of group membership, and group skills, c) and developing attitudes of acceptance and friendship between groups (Sleeter and Grant, 1994). The programs are usually delivered via staff development training for employees, video-taped programs, special courses for K-12 and postsecondary students, field trips, and other culturally unique experiences. The programs are considered successful if people of color experience increased feelings of inclusion and acceptance, and if the American society (and sponsoring organizations) experience fewer complaints of racism and/or racism related law suits.

### **Multi-Cultural**

Multi-cultural programs seek to promote socio-structural equality and cultural pluralism within organizations and in the wider society. This approach seeks to increase individuals' consciousness and appreciation of differences associated with the heritage, characteristics, and values of many different groups, as well as respecting the uniqueness of each individual. Therefore the explicit goal within sponsoring organizations is to strengthen the organization by leveraging a host of significant differences (Morrison, 1992). It grows out of a concern that society (and sponsoring organizations) as it currently exists is unfair and detrimental to many people. Equal opportunity is not afforded to every citizen. All ethnic and language groups are expected to display the behavioral and linguistic style of White, middle-class Americans before they are taken seriously (Sleeter and Grant, 1994). Theories of cultural transmission, social learning, and modeling provide insight into the processes people use to acquire society's values and beliefs.

Within the context of sponsoring organizations, this approach assumes that the organization must change and that the new norms must accommodate a wide range of employees (Morrison, 1992). The clients of these programs tend to be the same as those for cultural awareness programs. However, within academic institutions and programs, multi-cultural programs are designed to infuse content into existing courses that inform students of the contributions and perspectives of several different groups of people of

color. They also provide an analysis of these alternative viewpoints. The programs are implemented via the redesign of existing curricula and the selection of different textbooks for programs and classes. These efforts are also facilitated by attempts to eliminate bias structures within organizations and the use of non-traditional ethnic roles. Staff development programs are usually developed and implemented to acclimate the staff to the structural changes. These programs are considered successful if the staff and students are able to demonstrate increased knowledge of the historical, social, and economic contributions of people of color.

### **Ethno-Centrist**

Ethno-centric programs seek empowerment via the promotion of socio-structural equality, intra-group pride for individual ethnic populations, and broader recognition of the contributions and characteristics a particular ethnic group brings to mainstream American culture. Advocates of ethno-centric programs, which are identified as "single-group studies" by Sleeter and Grant (1994), seek greater power and control over economic and cultural resources for their particular ethnic group. They argue that often oppressed ethnic group members uncritically accept the status-quo and mainstream messages that depict negative images of the members of their own group. They are often taught that members of their ethnic group rarely make notable achievements, contributions, or political decisions, therefore, members of the group often see themselves as powerless and worthless. Yet they are told that in a free and democratic society, everyone can achieve to the level of his/her own personal potential. This approach thereby lays the foundation for social action by providing information about the group and the effects of past and present discrimination on the group. For example, Afrocentricity is a theory of social change and a method of analysis similar to "phenomenology". It evolves from an analysis and understanding of how African Americans experience the world they live in. Therefore, it is a viable tool for African Americans to solve complex problems relevant to them, e.g., Reagan-Bush "trickle-down" economics, the L.A. riots, the encroaching threat of AIDS, etc. (Fitchue, 1993).

These programs target everyone, but often seek the inclusion of members of the targeted ethnic group, e.g., African Americans, American Indians, Latinos, etc. The programs provide content on the culture of a particular group, how the group has been victimized by the mainstream society, and current social issues facing the group (i.e., from that group's perspective). These programs are delivered via classes, workshops, staff development programs, and the development of institutions and programs, e.g., Afro-American Studies, American Indian Studies, etc. for particular ethnic groups and language minorities. The programs are considered successful if participants demonstrate a "critical consciousness" of the targeted ethnic group's social and economic status and accomplishments, their struggle against oppression, and (for members of the targeted group) increased racial pride.

### **Anti-Racism**

Anti-racism programs are designed to promote social reconstruction and perspective transformation to eliminate oppression of one racial group by another. This approach deals more directly with oppression and socio-structural inequality than the other approaches presented above. For example, Ogbu (1993) observed that people of



color are routinely denied equal access to quality education through societal and community educational practices, and they are denied adequate and/or equal rewards with Whites for their educational accomplishments through job ceilings and other mechanisms. Schools further contribute to this unequal treatment via policies and practices, e.g., tracking, biased testing and curricula, and misclassification. Identifying this approach as "education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist", Sleeter and Grant (1994) argue that the programs work toward social justice by teaching political literacy. They seek to help people of color to understand how their ascribed characteristics (e.g., race, class, gender, etc.) and their culture impact on their oppression. This insight should lead them to develop the power and skills to articulate both their own goals and a vision of social justice for all groups, and to work toward these ends.

Anti-racism programs target a variety of clients both within the broader society and within sponsoring organizations. The content for these efforts is organized around race-related issues, utilize students' life experiences as starting points for analyzing oppression, teach critical thinking skills, analyzes alternative viewpoints, and teach social action and empowerment skills. These programs are delivered to clients via incorporation into existing classes (e.g., literacy classes) and staff development programs for managers and workers. The programs are considered successful when a significant decrease in socio-economic barriers for people of color is observed and the proverbial "glass ceiling" is removed.

### Conclusion

Cultural diversity is a social movement that has the potential to significantly alter the course of history for the great majority of citizens in North America. The field of adult education can (and should) play a vital role in the preparation of professionals to provide the training that propels the movement. This paper is intended to facilitate the theoretical foundation to such preparation by providing conceptual clarity to this dynamic area of theory and practice.

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## Learning in Personal and Professional Situations

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influences of personal and professional learning situations of the utilization of real-life learning strategies. Measurements using the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning (SKILLS) indicated that Wyoming school administrators differed in four strategy areas in relationship to the strategies they used in personal and professional situations. Metacognition skills were used in both areas, and demographic variables were not related to learning strategy use. Results indicate that learning strategy usage is contextual and that SKILLS can be adapted for specific situations.

### Introduction

Nearly 25 years ago, Knowles (1970) pointed out as one of the principles of andragogy that adults learn for the immediate application of the knowledge they acquire. Since then, much of the research on adult learning has focussed on why adults participate, what kinds of learning projects they undertake, and how does their individual learning style affect the learning. In these approaches to research, the implicit assumption was that the learning was a generic process that remained the same from one situation to another. The differences in the type of situation that one might learn has been ignored despite the fact that adults encounter daily a wide variety of real-life learning situations.

Adult educators are fond of distinguishing between formal and informal education. Both forms are abundant in adult education. Formal structured programs include educational activities in such places as business and industry, literacy programs, and the military. Informal education includes such things as self-directed learning, community action projects, networking, and private instruction. While emphasis has been given to defining and identifying these programs, little attention has been directed toward differentiating between the types of learning that goes on in each type of activity.

A major characteristic of learning is "the fact that adults engage in an educational activity because of some innate desire for developing new skills, acquiring new knowledge, improving already assimilated competencies, or sharpening powers of self-insight" (Brookfield, 1986, p. 11). Yet, one thing that has become dramatically clear is that many people have not learned the things they need in order to be productive citizens in today's changing world. Consequently, education has been under attack from numerous quarters. As educators try to deal with the new realities of the Information Age, they must ask if their perceptions of learning are correct. Are they operating from an antiquated paradigm of education or are they facilitating real-life learning? "Unfortunately, scholars and researchers have devoted little attention to informal learning in natural social settings. A fuller

understanding of informal adult learning activities might help professional adult educators to facilitate learning more effectively both in natural social settings and in more structured environments" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 153).

Sternberg (1990) has been in the vanguard of calling for a distinction in how intelligence is viewed and in relating learning to the setting in which it occurs. He calls for learning which is based in the actuality of life situations. There are numerous differences between learning for real-life problem solving and learning for academic endeavors. First, outside of school learners distinguish for themselves problems encountered in the real world as distinct from those problems identified and defined by someone such as a teacher. Second, real-life problems are usually not as well structured as those problems encountered in an academic setting. Third, most often school-related problems lack the contextualization existing in those encountered in the real world. Fourth, often in school settings information is given which enables the learner to work effectively in solving problems. However, in real life it is often difficult to obtain or discover the information that would aid the learner in resolving day to day problems. Fifth, in solving real problems, one must look not only at one's own perspective for resolution of the problem but also at those arguments that might be put forward by an opposing side. Sixth, school related problems predominantly teach learners to confirm what they already believe. Seventh, good feed-back is often lacking in real-life situations; sometimes it does not come until it is too late. Eighth, school environments teach people to work on problem solving on an individual basis. Real-life problems are quite frequently resolved by the group process of discussion. Hence, real-life learning strategies are dependent upon episodes that are characteristic of the real world in comparison to a rather artificial, academically contrived problem. Thus, real-life learning involves the reconceptualization of learning so that it reflects the realities of the world rather than being an artificially contrived exercise of the academic world.

Regardless of the type of setting, learners use various strategies to accomplish their learning needs. Learning strategies are those techniques or specialized skills that the learner has developed to use in both formal and informal learning situations (McKeachie, 1988). They are "the techniques and skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a specific learning task....Such strategies vary by individual and by learning objective" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 7-8). However, because of the lack of past distinctions in learning between formal and informal settings, it is not known if the skills learned in formal settings are transferable to problems which the learner faces in real life and if the same skills are used to solve academic problems applied in real-world settings.

### Methodology

Some of the daily learning situations which adults encounter relate to learning in professional situations while others deal with personal situations. Since past research has not distinguished between learning in these two types of situations, the purpose of this study was to investigate the influences of personal and professional learning situations on the utilization of real-life learning strategies.

One group of adults that have continuous learning needs to solve problems in their

professional situation is school administrators. Although the focus of the delivery of the services of the public schools is upon children and adolescents, the administrative staff are primarily engaged in the training and management of adults and in interacting with adults in various roles such as parents, teachers, staff, and community members. In their dual roles of active professionals and individual learners, the administrators must effectively resolve real-life problems in both the workplace and in their personal lives on a continual basis. As professionals, they have received extensive training in how to deal with these problems in the workplace. The methods and materials currently used to prepare school administrators stress sound academic learning strategies. The issue of real-life learning focuses on whether the administrators use the same learning strategies for their professional learning for problem solving as they use for their personal learning in other everyday learning situations.

This causal-comparative study sampled 163 of the 389 central office and building administrators in the public schools of Wyoming. Each participant completed three scenarios from the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS) that dealt with personal learning situations and three similar scenarios that dealt with professional situations. Demographic information related to age, academic preparation, job responsibilities, and job experience was collected. Statistical analyses involved calculations of *t*-tests to investigate differences in learning strategy usage in the two different types of situations and of regression analyses to test the ability of the various demographic variable to predict learning strategy usage.

The Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS) is a valid and reliable instrument that identifies learning strategies used in a variety of real-life, personal learning situations. It measures adult learning strategies in the five areas of metacognition, memory, metamotivation (awareness of and control over factors that energize and direct learning), resource management, and critical thinking. Construct and content validity for SKILLS were established through literature reviews, the testimony of a jury of experts, and statistical analysis; the instrument's reliability is .83 (Conti & Fellenz, 1991). SKILLS consists of two sets of six scenarios based on a variety of real-life learning situations. Respondents select scenarios which are meaningful to them from one set and rank the various learning strategies according to whether they would use the strategy, might possibly use the strategy, or would not use the strategy in this particular learning situation.

For the Wyoming study, three of the original SKILLS scenarios were used, and three additional scenarios were constructed to represent learning in the professional context of the school administrator. These professionally contextual scenarios dealt with the contemporary administrative situations of taking a test to achieve a new certification level, formulating a plan to convert from a junior high configuration to a middle school, and improving a drop-out plan that was community based. Each of these scenarios was constructed using similar statements from three matched scenarios from the original SKILLS scenarios. Thus, the two sets of scenarios asked the same questions but in a different context. Since these scenarios used the same basic format as SKILLS for the scenario and responses and since they were based on the real-life situations of the participants, it was assumed that the word changes did not affect the scenarios' validity. However, since such changes could influence the scenarios' reliability, reliability for the new



scenarios was established by computing an unequal-length Spearman-Brown correlation on the professional responses. When all possible combinations of the three professional scenarios were checked, 85% of the correlations were at the standard acceptable reliability coefficient of .7; the remaining 15% were at .6.

### Findings

The scores for the strategies that the administrators used in their professional learning situations were compared to the scores for the strategies that they used in their personal learning. Separate comparisons using *t*-tests were made in each of the five areas of metacognition, memory, metamotivation, resource management, and critical thinking. The administrators differed in the strategies they used in four of the five areas. The administrators applied critical thinking ( $t=2.03$ ,  $df=162$ ,  $p=.04$ ) and metamotivation ( $t=9.22$ ,  $df=162$ ,  $p=.001$ ) more in their personal learning than in job-related situations. However, they applied resource management ( $t=10.49$ ,  $df=162$ ,  $p=.001$ ) and memory ( $t=3.62$ ,  $df=162$ ,  $p=.001$ ) strategies more in their professional situations than in personal situations. The only area that they applied the same in both types of situations was metacognition. Thus, Wyoming administrators utilized different strategies for learning and problem solving on the job than for personal learning situations.

The relationship between selected demographic variables and learning strategies was investigated through the use of multiple regression. The demographic factors were age, type of academic training, years of experience, and scope of administrative duties. Separate regression analyses were conducted to determine the influence of the demographic variable in predicting learning strategies in the personal situations and professional situations. A series of regression analyses were conducted in each area. One set of analyses used the overall SKILLS score for each of the five components of the instrument; the other set used the three sub-components of each area. The statistical conclusions were the same for all of the regression analyses; no significant relationships were found. Thus, "none of the demographic variables can be used to predict either personal or professional real-life learning strategies" (McKenna, 1991, p. 92).

### Implications for SKILLS Usage

The scenarios in SKILLS are based upon universal situations that adults are likely to face in the course of everyday events. In investigating the resources used by adult learners and the economic impact of learning activities on a community, Shirk (1990) uncovered nine general categories of learning for real-life situations. These types of learning activities are vocational, domestic, interpersonal, religious, medical, recreational, cultural, political, and other (p.44). Shirk's categories served as general guidelines for creating the scenarios in SKILLS. Within each scenario, the questions follow a pattern related to the five component areas that constitute the theoretical basis for the instrument.

For this study, specific learning situations were used which reflect the actual learning conditions faced by the participants. The scenarios that were created followed the format of the general scenarios for SKILLS, and the individual items were modified to reflect the

content of the scenario. The validity and reliability checks on the scenarios created for this study support the use of this approach. Thus, researchers in the future may either use the existing form of SKILLS which contains scenarios related to Shirk's nine general categories of universals that adults encounter or create specific scenarios using the established form of SKILLS as a model. Such a choice can allow researchers to tailor their learning strategies instrument to fit their distinctive need.

### **The Contextual Nature of Learning Strategies**

This study found that learning strategies used by school administrators in Wyoming are contextual and are not related to selected demographic factors. In real-life learning situations, administrators use different strategies depending on the particular learning situation they encounter. Choices are made as to how they will approach each learning situation, and these learning needs are met in distinctive ways. Learning for personal needs is viewed differently than learning for job-related situations. When faced with a learning situation, the learning strategies used must be selected specifically, and these change depending upon the learner's perception of what has to be learned. Administrators are active learners; much of their time is spent in finding creative solutions when confronted by difficult, external problems. Specific learning strategies are used to meet particular learning needs. The learning strategies used by a school administrator when learning for tasks such as making budget and personnel decisions differ from the specific strategies used in personal learning contexts such as how to decrease one's cholesterol level. On a daily basis, administrators are required to remember details related to such things as the law and district policies and must recall knowledge related to numerous people. These tasks mandate that administrators master and use the strategies in the memory area of (a) structuring or processing information so that material will be better stored, retained, and retrieved, (b) using external aids to reinforce memory, and (c) using remembrances, mental images, or other memories to facilitate planning and problem solving. Likewise, as leaders in their area, they are responsible for the efficient use of resources. Since education is a human enterprise, it is not surprising that the administrators rely heavily on the resource management strategies of (a) knowing how to locate and use the best sources of information, (b) using appropriate resources rather than just those that are conveniently available, and (c) integrating others into the learning process.

However, the strategy areas of metamotivation and critical thinking had greater application in conjunction with contextual situations of a personal nature. Personal learning situations might provide greater variability in assessing what needs to be learned. When learning about something that has immediate application to one's self or the home environment and which is not required by some external force, one has a greater use for the metamotivational strategies of (a) focusing on the material to be learned, (b) recognizing the value and satisfaction to one's self of learning the specific material, and (c) believing that one can complete the learning task successfully. Also, the self-initiated and self-directed nature of learning for personal situations may encourage the greater use of the critical thinking strategies of (a) evaluating the assumptions and context of the learning situation, (b) generating alternatives for learning, and (c) conditionally accepting the learning and continuing to reflect upon it.

While the context of the situation affected the learning strategies used by the administrators, the need for and use of metacognition learning strategies did not differ as the situation changed. In both types of situations, the administrators relied on the metacognition strategies of (a) analyzing the best way to proceed with a specific learning task, (b) monitoring their learning throughout the learning project, and (c) adjusting their learning process to improve the outcome. Thus, knowing how one is learning and consciously directing this learning appears to be a generic strategy which is beneficial for learning regardless of the situation.

Thus, it cannot be assumed that everybody learns the same and that the skills taught in formal classroom will have universal application in informal, real-life situations. Personal learning needs may require different strategies than professional learning situations. The context of the learning situation can greatly influence which strategies are relevant and which can be used effectively. Real-life learning necessitates that learners be equipped with a variety of strategies which can serve as a reservoir from which they can draw as needed. In going far beyond the traditional skills taught in regular academic programs, this reservoir must contain strategies that prepare learners for dealing with a variety of real-life learning situations. The key ingredient for activating this learning-how-to-learn process is learners having a self-knowledge of the metacognitive procedure of how and why they learn.

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## TOWARD A SUBSTANTIVE THEORY OF CONTROL OF LEARNING WITHIN GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

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**Abstract:** This study uses the grounded theory building methods of Glaser and Strauss (1967) to produce a substantive theory of the control of learning within the context of grassroots initiatives.

**Context:** One of the key megatrends in global society is toward social initiative from the grassroots level. Quietly, but effectively concerned individuals in communities around the world have been coming together to solve their own problems. In an era of shrinking government budgets and decreased centralized planning, the time seems ripe for the study of grassroots initiatives as social phenomena and as occasions for learning.

**Research Focus:** The study focused on the control of learning within grassroots initiatives which the author conceptualized as an interactive process among those in leadership positions; group participants; the group itself as a "learning organization"; and outside influences including intentional adult educators.

**Research Process:** The researcher sought to build substantive grounded theory using the methods established by Glaser, Strauss, and Corbin (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) as well as action science methods developed by Argyris et. al. (1985).

In the Glaser and Strauss (1967) model, initial properties of the phenomenon being studied are discerned based on fieldwork and exploration of technical and non-technical literature. In this study, the initial fieldwork consisted of the author's own experience in grassroots initiatives; conversations with fellow grassroots initiators; wide reading in the group dynamics, community development, sociology, and learning theory literatures; and exploration of published case studies from both professional and popular literature. This exploration led to an initial conceptual framework or orienting theory which was first presented in a thesis proposal.

Concept formation continued beyond the presentation of the proposal through the author's reading, observations of a variety of grassroots initiatives, re-coding of in-depth interviews with grassroots initiators originally conducted by Seidel and Thompson (1990), and discussions with colleagues at two research conferences. This non-linear process was documented in a research journal and a variety of summary memos which constitute an "audit trail" for the research. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This phase is what Miles and Huberman (1984) call "enumerative induction." The result was a heuristic framework or orienting theory which formed the basis of intensive fieldwork.

The second phase of the study consisted of "eliminative induction" (Miles and Huberman, 1984). In this phase, the intent was to apply the emerging concepts to carefully chosen cases to determine: (a) if the processes discerned from the case study literature and Seidel and Thompson interviews actually occurred in grassroots initiatives; (b) if the concepts were useful in understanding the control of learning processes within grassroots initiatives; and (c) how the concepts could be polished to develop a substantive theory of the control of learning within grassroots initiatives. This "eliminative induction" phase is also referred to in qualitative research as "constant comparison: (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and "structural corroboration" (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

In this phase, the author chose several grassroots initiatives using



purposeful sampling of the critical case type. (Patton, 1990, p. 182-83). The examples represented general and focused neighborly affection, concern for the common good, social advocacy, and self-help initiatives. The specific cases were chosen because they (a) clearly represented each of the types, (b) were extensive and full of rich, thick data and (c) were easily accessible to the author both in terms of location and established relationships with the participants.

Data was gathered using triangulation. Key sources included: (a) written materials such as official minutes, newspaper articles, scrapbooks, diaries, and journals of participants; (b) in-depth interviews with key initiators; (c) participant observations at most of the sites and (d) discussions with colleagues and other grassroots initiators about the significance and validity of the emerging theory. Analysis of the data was conducted using a cross-case study method to modify the initial orienting theory.

After the "eliminative induction" phase (Miles and Huberman, 1984), the author was left with a tremendous amount of data on learning within grassroots initiatives. A decision was made, based on the thinking of Strauss and Corbin (1990), to focus analysis on one particular aspect or "story" about learning in grassroots initiatives. The control of learning within grassroots initiatives was chosen as this focus. Control of learning in grassroots initiatives was conceptualized as an interactive process among group leaders, group participants, the group itself as a "learning organization" and outside resources. Many of the case studies found in the initial literature review, several of the Seidel and Thompson interviews, and all of the triangulated field studies were prepared in a standard format and re-coded in light of the central theme of the control of learning.

Finally, a polished substantive theory of the control of learning processes in grassroots initiatives was developed including implications for adult education research and practice.

**Assumptions Guiding the Research:** As a search for grounded theory, this study had no pre-set hypotheses or formal research questions. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Initial open and axial coding and theoretical sensitizing provided some general directions or "orienting theory. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Whyte, 1984). The major assumptions of the orienting theory are as follows:

- (1) Significant learning occurs in grassroots initiatives.
- (2) Learning in grassroots initiatives is non-linear and has both analogical and analytical components.
- (3) Learning in grassroots initiatives occurs as both an individual phenomenon and as a group process.
- (4) Individual learning in grassroots initiatives is of four key types: instrumental, dialogic, connected, and transformational.
- (5) Groups engage in a process comparable to learning in individuals. Important components of group learning include: information gathering and dissemination; the group as a "learning organization"; the role played by the group in the control of learning and instruction; and the development of group norms which create a group "learning style."
- (6) Control of learning within grassroots initiatives is an interactive process involving: (a) individual participants as they engage in decision-making; (b) decisions of group leaders; (c) group norms, expectations, and communication patterns; and (d) the impact of outsiders including intentional adult educators.
- (7) Control of learning within grassroots initiatives for both groups and individuals can be understood using Candy's (1991) categories: autonomy, self-management, autodidaxy, and control of instruction.
- (8) Understanding learning processes in grassroots initiatives is useful because it gives guidance to participants and to intentional adult educators who may wish to work with such groups.

**Key Findings:** The following key findings evolved through the constant comparison process.

The control of learning within grassroots initiatives was a process that varied with the social context and with type of learning.

Learning processes within grassroots initiatives were non-linear, involved both individual and group processes, were interactive, and involved reflective action. Several types of learning were found. Both analytical and visionary or analogical thinking skills were used. Informational or instrumental learning was important in developing the knowledge and skill base to accomplish project goals. Communicative learning involving both rational discourse and connected learning (i.e. building on each other's ideas) was key to the learning process. Almost all participants showed evidence of perspective transformation, a profound change in their beliefs about self, others, and society due to participation in grassroots initiatives. In most cases this was very positive as participants grew in wisdom, a sense of personal worth, and a sense of the value of cooperative effort. However, in a few cases, participation resulted in bitterness and cynicism. Positive perspective transformation seemed to be related to group unity, a ritual life which bound the group to each other and positive roles of participants.

Grassroots initiatives fell into five distinct structures or social contexts, each with slightly different functions and slightly different relationships with secondary (or sponsoring) organizations and networks. These groups included self-advocacy, general neighborly affection, focused neighborly affection, the common good, and self-help.

**Self-advocacy groups** were formed to resist a perceived threat or to unite a cause. They were "fiery" in nature, intense and volatile in both internal and external relationships. Most were independent of secondary group sponsorship and made good use of liaisons with other comparable organizations and meta-networks.

**General neighborly affection groups** were formed to help the less fortunate, often from the Judeo-Christian tradition of love for God expressed as love of neighbor. General neighborly affection groups usually formed slowly around persons with helping roles in poor neighborhoods or rural communities. In such communities, a multitude of projects often grew naturally and organically from perceived needs. Such groups developed mutually caring relationships and a strong ritual life. Secondary groups were usually tolerant of general neighborly affection efforts but were rarely actively supportive. Networking was usually person-to-person as individuals took an interest in the cause and felt called to contribute their time, talents, and financial resources.

**Focused neighborly affection groups** also helped the less fortunate, but concentrated on a single intense need. They were usually catalyzed by a single individual or core group who felt called to meet a particular need. Groups developed strong ties and often had both the strengths and weaknesses of families, with deep commitment and intense conflict sometimes existing side-by-side. Secondary groups were important to these efforts, but their roles were sometimes perplexing involving painful choices between the group's original mission and the requirements of funding sources. Networking was important and helped new groups gain credibility, protection, and support.

**Common good groups** were usually formed to meet the needs of a broad cross-section of the community. They were usually formed by persons representing agency interests. Participants in common good efforts typically simultaneously represented their individual ideas and those of their employers which at times were in conflict. Effective common good efforts were based on a sophisticated level of communication skills including active listening, assertiveness, negotiation skills, conflict resolution, problem solving, and systems thinking. The goal of effective common good efforts was to develop "win-win" situations which focused on the population to be served. Networks

were very important in common good initiatives. Successful common good efforts were "professional" in the best sense of the term, based on mutual respect and a sense of intentional cooperation.

**Self-help groups** were formed by persons with similar needs. They were the least formal of the groups studied. Groups usually developed a fairly informal structure consisting of a core group that made recommendations and a larger group of participants that responded to those recommendations. Since self-help groups were often dependent on a few persons, they were sometimes rather fragile, but most seemed to have the life span needed to meet the targeted need. Self-help groups were usually independent of institutional support except for such practical needs as meeting space. Networking was somewhat important in terms of contact with similar groups and word-of-mouth invitations to individuals to join. The self-help groups studied seemed somewhat more likely than other types to use written materials and to design their programs around ideas found in books.

A substantive theory of the control of instrumental and communicative learning within grassroots initiatives forms the heart of the thesis. The main "story" uncovered in this research is that participants in grassroots initiatives used a process of connected learning to develop the knowledge and skills (i.e. instrumental learning) needed to accomplish the group mission. This process was controlled through a symbolic interactional process of role taking and role making by leaders, participants, and outsiders. The process took place within a social and temporal context which affected the quality of the learning process and its results.

**Leadership:** Most of the groups studied had several leaders although a few had only one charismatic leader on whom the burden fell. Most leaders were socially aware individuals with an intense sense of vocation and responsibility to others. Often their leadership efforts began when painful personal experiences intersected social reality leading to a growing social awareness. Leaders learned through a process of action and reflection which many characterized as trial and error. Most leaders of successful initiatives exhibited what the author has called "focused passion". Most had an incredible sense of energy and drive as well as a sense of duty bordering on stubbornness and a steadfast faith in God and/or humanity. Their lives were often fully dedicated to their mission as they conceived it. Leaders valued both shared power and shared or connected learning. Leaders in grassroots initiatives were "weavers". They gathered information from a variety of sources and continuously wove it into patterns of understanding which they shared freely with others. They were generally competent self-directed learners: autonomous, self-managing, autodidacts who could plan, execute, and evaluate educational experiences. (Candy, 1991).

**Participants:** Levels of participation in the groups varied from active leaders who practically lived and breathed for their projects to persons who contributed a little money or a few hours of effort. The study concentrated on active participants, those who were on the involved side of this continuum. Most participants had a variety of motives. The most common were direct experiences with the issue or need addressed and/or a deep commitment to peace, love, and justice. Participants, like grassroots leaders, tended to value "power with" rather than "power over" others. Participants with leadership traits tended to be creative, intuitive thinkers while followers side tended to be more concrete, sequential in their thinking. Both types were needed. Personality types greatly affected the control of learning. Successful groups had a balance of personalities and respected the contributions of each type. Grassroots initiatives were emotional experiences for most participants. Emotions varied from joyous satisfaction to dark despair. Learning to manage these intense emotions was very important. Other participant factors which influenced group success were ascribed statuses of group members such as age and gender; achieved statuses such as professional or personal achievement; and present and past involvements in similar activities. As might be expected, successful groups usually had participants

with prior experience in successful group initiatives. Participants played a variety of roles in grassroots initiatives. The most common were: leader, enthusiast, credibility giver, enabler, and client volunteer. The characteristics of individual participants gave each grassroots initiative its unique flavor.

**Role taking and role making:** In a symbolic interactional sense, roles are not unchanging behaviors and expectations belonging to a single individual. Rather, roles are chosen through role taking and role making processes that are continually changing and are exchanged among group participants. The author identified several roles common in grassroots initiatives. The gerund (i.e. -ing) form was chosen to indicate that these were processes, not static conditions. They included: **catalyzing** or initiating by communicating the original dream to others; **bridging** or holding the tension between the project and outside resources; **weaving**, or pulling together people, ideas, and tasks; **inspiring**, or encouraging individuals to be the best they could be; **envisioning** or picturing how an event or project will operate; **cheerleading**, or finding the best in every situation; **splicing**, or pulling together broken pieces when communication breaks down; **teaching/learning** as an interactive inseparable process; and **serving**, or considering no task too small, dirty, or menial if it is necessary for the success of the initiative. These roles were important components of the control of learning.

**Group learning as a cognitive process:** The data revealed that grassroots groups learn in a process analogous to individual cognition. Learning takes place in stages that may be categorized as: **data gathering** or sensation; **the development of understanding** or perception; **consolidation** or perception; **decision making**; **action**; and **renewed information gathering**.

**Role of outside educators:** Few outside educators were involved in the groups studied. Outside educators seemed to fall into two categories: life-giving and destructive. **Life-giving outside educators** saw themselves as **servants** of the group. They provided information and coaching as needed but did not attempt to control the situation. They left ownership with group leaders and active participants. They were usually good listeners, weavers, and splicers. They saw teaching/learning as an interactive process and did not set themselves up as all-knowing experts. **Destructive outsiders** showed a high need for control and **viewed participants as students rather than equals**. The choice of outsider role were largely chosen by the groups themselves. Effective groups remained in overall control and defined the role of the outside educator. Ineffective groups abdicated responsibility.

**Implications:** The study builds a substantive theory of the control of learning within the context of grassroots initiative. It contributes to adult education theory through the clarification of adult learning processes in natural settings, refinement of concepts of self-directed learning, through clarification of role making and role taking within the interactional processes of group learning; and through clarification of group learning as a process analogous to individual cognition. It contributes equally to adult education practice with implications for both grassroots initiators and outside educators. Finally, it has implications for a society which desperately needs to implement effective social action to conquer a wide variety of social problems.



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## Invisible Colleges Revealed: professional networks and personal interconnections amongst adult educators

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### Abstract

This paper describes some findings from a study conducted in Australia to investigate professional networks (or invisible colleges) and personal interconnections amongst university-based adult educators. The importance of such networks in personal career terms and in the development of professional cultures is analysed. The significance of conferences, e-mail and 'opinion leaders' in the formation and maintenance of invisible colleges is discussed and power relations and patterns of influence are examined.

### Background to the study

I first came across the concept of invisible colleges at the same time as I began to develop an identity as an academic researcher and social scientist. This was when I was a postgraduate student of the sociology of education and mass communication in the University of Leicester in the mid-1970s. A good deal of attention was focused on the (then) 'new' sociology of education, and British sociologists of education were at this time much preoccupied with understanding the nature of paradigm shifts in social science (for a concise summary of developments in the sociology of education at that time, see Bernstein, 1977).

As a postgraduate student I perceived the world of research as a sort of secret society which I was anxious to join. I saw researchers as extremely clever individuals who sat at their desks being inspired and having brilliant ideas. It was some time before it dawned on me that knowledge was developed collectively, and that researchers had interpersonal connections and exercised influence over each others' work. The idea that developments in social science came about as a result of connections between people who studied at the same institution, supervised each others' theses, and even lived and slept together, was a revelation. At some point in the development of this new and exciting perspective on sociology as network rather than discipline, I read Diana Crane's *Invisible Colleges*, a study of the diffusion of knowledge amongst scientific communities. I thought it was fascinating.

In recent years, much of my work has centred on involvement in several learned societies and professional networks such as the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA), the Group Relations Training Association (GRTA) and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). Through an exchange programme organised by SCUTREA in the mid-1980s, I became acquainted with the AERC. Before I attended my first AERC gathering in 1986, I gained some clues about the operation of the invisible college network to which the AERC approximates through reading a paper which summarised a decade of AERC history (Boshier, 1984). Working within these organisations has provided me with a sense of interconnectedness and belonging, and has been central to the development of my academic and professional identity. My experience in these groups has enhanced my interest in the relationship between networks of adult educators and the knowledge base in the field. There is some coincidence between the invisible colleges to which I feel I belong and the professional associations of which I am a member in a more tangible sense — i.e., by paying a subscription. My attempt to make sense of the influence which the invisible colleges to which I belong have exercised over my own personal and professional development is documented fully in Miller, 1992.

There is currently a great deal of interest in autobiography and life history among British social scientists and educators and one consequence of this interest has been the publication of a number of reflective accounts of the research process (see, for example, Burgess, 1984; Miller, 1993). However, these 'true stories' of research projects often leave out significant parts of the story. The summaries of relevant literature with the inevitable catalogue of names in brackets usually omit to mention the interpersonal connections between the individuals concerned. Recognition of this tendency has helped to shape the focus of the research described here.

### Theoretical framework

The concept of the invisible college is taken from the work of Derek de Solla Price on the sociology of science. In *Little Science, Big Science* (1965), he uses the term to describe how groups develop within large and widespread scientific communities. He suggests that for each group there exists a circuit of institutions, research centres and conferences which enables individual members of the group to meet piecemeal, so that over a number of years everyone in that field knows everyone else. The invisible colleges is seen as a vehicle for conferring status and prestige and it solves communication problems by reducing a large group to a size that can be handled through interpersonal relations.

Crane develops the concept in her study of the diffusion of knowledge in scientific communities (1972). She focuses particularly on communication networks among mathematicians and rural sociologists, and shows how invisible colleges help to unify areas of knowledge and to provide coherence and direction to the fields within which they operate. She suggests that the central figures and their associates in these networks 'are closely linked by direct ties and develop a kind of solidarity that is useful in building morale and maintaining motivation among members' (p. 139).

Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) studies of voting decisions and of buying habits indicate that mass media messages are mediated by 'opinion leaders' who take in more information than average on specific topics and in turn communicate it to others; the process of mass communication is thus characterised by a 'two-step flow' of information from mass media to public. It may be that this concept has some application in academic communities, with certain individuals reading (or at least scanning) more books and journals than average, and then communicating the knowledge absorbed to their colleagues.

### Research questions and methodology

In 1992 I spent six months in Australia, researching and teaching in the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). One account of that experience has already been rehearsed in this context in a paper given at the 1993 AERC (Miller and Usher, 1993). During my stay at UTS I conducted a study amongst university-based practitioners of adult education to investigate the operation of professional networks, or invisible colleges, in adult education. I wanted to discover how my respondents formed their identities as adult educators (and, for example, whether aspects of family life or schooling influenced career choice), what they perceived to be important sources of influence on their intellectual development and pedagogic practice, and to what extent invisible colleges were significant in shaping the development of theory and practice in their work.

I collected data through extensive interviews with twenty-two individuals (seven women and fifteen men). Since I was on study leave in the institution where a majority of my respondents was based, some additional data was collected through participant observation. I also conducted action research workshops in which a number of my respondents participated.

Since the adult education community in Australia has some links with that in the UK (and indeed with that in the USA), but the groups are somewhat distinct. I knew enough of the world which my respondents inhabited to be able to ask informed questions, but was sufficiently marginal to it to enable them to talk relatively freely about their networks and interconnections.

UTS contains the largest critical mass of academics concerned with teaching and research in adult education in Australasia. One of my respondents said, 'I know just about everyone who teaches adult education in Australia. There are not many ... most of them are here.'

There are two schools of adult education in the Faculty of Education: the School of Adult and Language Education and the School of Adult Vocational Education, with approximately seventy members of academic staff in all. Twenty of the group I interviewed work at UTS. The other two respondents are individuals with links to the Australian network: one is a New Zealander and the other is English.

### Results

Most of my respondents saw their membership of professional networks and informal groups as extremely important in terms of their career development. The networks mentioned most frequently were Australian organisations such as the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE), the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA), the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), the Australian Consortium for Experiential Education (ACEE) and the Australian Institute of Training and Development (AITD). Three of my respondents had in the past belonged to a small but significant group based in Sydney which had monthly meetings and called itself the Black Eagles of Adult Education ('a really good secret society name', said a founder member).

Three of those I interviewed perceived North American groupings such as the AERC and the Commission of Professors to be significant in terms of their own development, while three others mentioned the British organisation SCUTREA as an influential network. The International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education (ILSCAE) and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) were each mentioned by three respondents as important.

In some cases it was clear that non-membership was as significant as membership. It should perhaps be stressed that a reference group, which is defined by Merton as a group which provides 'a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation' (Merton, 1957, p. 283), may be significant as a source of norms or values whether or not one is actually a member of that group. Several of my respondents talked of groups which they thought were significant in defining who they were *not*, or which they saw as definitely 'other'. One of them described a significant experience in relation to a national organisation with which he now felt out of sympathy:

'I have come and gone from groups. I have tried some and I have abandoned them ... A good example is A. I joined it because I thought "Look, I am in a Faculty of Adult Education ..., I really should belong to the national group on adult education," but then I found that the articles in its journal were being written by people like the wife of the Prime Minister and so I thought, "Why am I reading this? It is like reading the *Women's Weekly* or something."

Another respondent thought that groups to which he did not belong exercised an indirect influence on his work by virtue of the fact that some of his colleagues belonged to them:

'I made a conscious decision not to be involved [in C.]. I have not been to any of their conferences or anything like that and yet they have an influence because some of my colleagues are involved. And other associations that people are involved in, to the extent that they influence my colleagues, influence me.'

### *Opinion leaders*

Some individuals may be seen as 'opinion leaders' in their groups. These individuals read widely, attend conferences and other professional meetings regularly and are active networkers, often acting as mentors or sponsors for junior colleagues. They are influential in relation to those around them, and play an active part in shaping the knowledge base of their field. One individual (D.) in my sample who seemed to fit this pattern was mentioned by over half of the other respondents as influential in terms of their professional development. He described his pattern of activity in the following way:

'There is a domain of things that I scan in journals and in books and I scan them with my antenna attuned, looking for things that resonate ... I kind of look at journals and I look at people that I know of, or know about, and see what they are doing ... there is a sense that I am trying to tune into a kind of sense of the times ... There's a lot of broking, of putting people in contact with one another that is important in what I do and there is the sort of brokering of ideas as well. I mean, there is this book we are working on at the moment ... In the book are people ... I have met in different contexts ... some of them are quite surprised to see who they are in the book with. It's almost like I am continuously in the process of kind of creating new sub-areas. That's what I quite enjoy.'

Five of my respondents mentioned a particular text as one which they had read recently and found stimulating and/or influential; it emerged that the book had been lent to one of the five by D. (although, interestingly, D. had not actually read the book himself). This individual had in turn recommended it to the other four. D. himself described the way in which he made efforts to draw to colleagues' attention literature which he saw as interesting or significant:

'I have fallen into a little pattern in my office of leaving recent books on my coffee table so that when people come in to see me first of all there is something for them to look at if I am not quite there at the moment but also it is a way of drawing attention to things I have come across recently.'

### *Reading, writing and citing*

Among those I interviewed, there was a wide variation of patterns of academic reading. Two people reeled off lists of more than twenty journals they regularly read — although one of these admitted that he often scanned articles rather than read them in detail. Another talked of 'binge reading' back issues of journals at intervals. Yet another declared ('this is just between you, me and the tape recorder') a complete absence of interest in journals in the adult education field. A majority of those interviewed stressed the importance of personal contacts and recommendations in determining what they read. The following are three typical responses to a question about how my respondents decided what to read:

'People send me things and they reference an article that I didn't know about. I go and check that up ... Sometimes students put in a piece of work and they have looked at something I didn't know about. So I chase that. Or the people that I work with ... say, 'Have you heard about this?' or, 'So and so has just done this.' I don't spend a lot of time in the library looking at the latest issue of the journals by and large. I tend to find out by word of mouth.'

'Here we are pretty good as a mob, like we pass things on to one another ... S. is great like that. S. goes off to England and she comes back with a load of books and she is very generous with them. Some people hug the stuff to themselves but she doesn't ... You go into somebody's office, even a person who might hug it to his bosom a little bit, and you see it on the shelf and away you go.'

'You follow up on good hints ... that sort of recommendation is very important ... I read about three hundred pages of academic writing a week on average. P. would read, and this is no bullshit, close to five thousand ... He will list off about twenty things he has read, tell me sixteen that are crap and these two are well worth looking at and I will go and read the two that are well worth looking at. P. is a wonderful filter.'

Another respondent said that his interpersonal connections were important in determining the books and articles he cited in the course of his own writing:

'Let's look at the references in this publication ... Who am I citing here? It is basically a mixture of people who I know, and I am citing their work because I have either met them or they did something I know about through some personal contact ... It's always easier to cite people making a particular point when you know them than when you don't know them. I am sure that other people would have made the same points as I am referring to here but I don't know that.'

### *Conferences*

Conferences were seen by most of my respondents as significant in terms of linking them into national and international networks of adult educators. One individual described his conference attendance as part of a conscious networking strategy:

'I went along [to S. conference] as a learner there because I felt very undernetworked in terms of adult ed in the UK ... The reason I went to S. was not because of the content of the conference but in order to meet people in the field, to suss them out.'

One of the senior practitioners in my sample described his approach to conferences in the following way:



'I have had a wonderfully frustrating time trawling every conference in human resource development almost on behalf of my friends and colleagues ... My first question would have to be "Is there any conference in the world that will be in any way satisfying to us?"'

Another interviewee said he rarely engaged in rewarding interaction at conferences because 'you are all too busy sitting there listening to papers'; he felt that adult education conferences had a potential for promoting synergy and stimulating forms of communication which was rarely tapped:

'I have never really liked conferences much. I know that is naughty ... I don't like staying by myself in daggy little hotel rooms across the world. What they are good for, I think, ... is if you get the right people together and give them enough time and don't have too many papers ... you will start to empathise with people according to your principles and then you will follow them up.'

#### *Electronic mail as a means by which networks are maintained*

Invisible colleges may span several continents, and electronic mail has become an important medium for the development of relationships within professional groups. The following two comments on the importance of e-mail in facilitating communication amongst academic communities and sustaining networks are typical:

'E-mail is really quite critical. Like having been to North America in the early '80s and come back and having felt that I had fallen off the end of the bloody world because if you weren't at last week's conference they don't remember you exist in North America ... E-mail ... enables you to remain visible to ... people in the field. You can make interventions periodically that can have quite an influence ... You could write a particularly provocative but quite well pointed piece and for the next two days they will all be discussing you and what you said. It is a very easy way to remain visible.'

'[E-mail] is often a lot more satisfying than a 'phone call because you actually can engage in an act of communication and be fairly confident that it gets through and that they will respond within a reasonable period of time ... There are some people who have an e-mail address and then never read their e-mails. They are definitely on my black list.'

Several respondents at UTS remarked that they could not now imagine being able to operate effectively in academic life without access to the Internet, although it is clear that outside North America many scholars are fearful or ignorant of this form of communication, and may be in danger of increasing professional isolation as a result.

#### *Invisible colleges as enabling — or exclusive?*

The majority of my respondents talked of the invisible colleges to which they belonged in positive terms, and saw such groupings as enabling and empowering. Influential individuals cited by my respondents were generally characterised as mentors or gate-openers. However, some networks were seen as exercising undue influence over careers and reputations:

'I always think there are some gravy trains out there that I am not on because I haven't sort of tipped the driver. One that I am not on the inside of but which is clearly influential is ... the publishing world ... That is a very insidious network and has a very important gatekeeping role. You can see that at work. I had a couple of chapters in a Jossey-Bass thing once ... and the students here asked, "How the hell did you get invited to do that?" So I put it all up on the blackboard. It was all, you know, who knew who.'

Several (though not all) of my female respondents saw gender as an important variable in determining patterns of membership of certain invisible colleges. One, who said 'I have ... a fairly difficult and stressful relationship with the guys I work with inside the university', reported that she felt excluded from some powerful decision-making groups because she was a woman. Some of the men I interviewed made reference to 'mateship' (a term generally used in Australia to signify forms of male bonding) as significant in determining with which of their colleagues they chose to work.

#### *Collaboration*

A theme which ran through a number of the interviews I conducted was the opportunity created for the development of collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships through membership of invisible colleges. Two senior practitioners saw their experience of collaboration as the most satisfying aspect of their professional life:

'The thing I have learned the most in the last few years ... is the value of working in teams ... Since we have been getting more sort of encouragement to do research I suppose I have done joint publications or projects with at least ten people. I didn't count them. It is probably more ten to fifteen people ... I don't think I have worked with anyone where it was a disaster ... Anyway, I think it is important because I find that if you are on a project with three people, it is much easier to write the report and get the work done than if you are just doing it yourself.'

'I like doing things collaboratively. I don't like working on my own although I have to do a certain amount of that in my work. But also, if I bring people together I can actually do a lot more than I can do on my own — you can present something that is actually further ahead, as it were.'

Several of my respondents were regretful of the fact that collaboration was not generally encouraged in the academic environment, but rather actively discouraged through promotions procedures and research assessment exercises. The culture of universities was seen as promoting individualism and competition:

'There are very few incentives for people to work collaboratively really within the university itself. I go for my interview competing. There are very few indicators used in giving people promotion, indicators that ask for those people to give demonstrable evidence that they have worked collaboratively with their colleagues over the past year and have their colleagues actually testify to that.'

### **Significance to the field of adult education**

The debate over the 'grey book' at the 1992 AERC revealed a widespread concern about how adult education is defined, and about which perspectives and whose voices are included in the influential texts. Adult educators need to be self-reflexive and to examine their own practices. This study is intended to contribute to an understanding of how professional networks develop in adult education, and of the operation of elites and power relationships in this field. Invisible colleges are indispensable components in the development of academic disciplines and fields of practice and as such they need to be rendered visible and their structures and mechanisms analysed and made explicit. Many of those I interviewed revealed a high degree of self-awareness about their own networking activities, although several of them commented that being interviewed on this subject had prompted them to examine their routine interaction with colleagues in a more systematic way.

In this paper it has only been possible to give a brief sketch of some aspects of invisible college activity in adult education. I believe that there is considerable potential for further study. A detailed examination of such invisible colleges in the North American context, where the adult education community is more extensive and more widely dispersed, might well be attempted.

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## CRITICAL THINKING IN RESPIRATORY CARE PRACTICE

Shelley C. Mishoe and Bradley C. Courtenay

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the reflective, communicative, practical and experiential aspects of critical thinking (CT) in respiratory care practice using a qualitative research methodology. Critical thinking is described in terms of practical knowledge grounded within the actual performance, culture and context of clinical practice.

### What is Critical Thinking?

According to Garrison (1991), many authors claim that teaching critical thinking is an identifying characteristic of adult education. There are numerous conceptions and theoretical frameworks of CT that are evident in the literature. After an extensive review of the alternative definitions of CT, the following was adopted for this study (Paul, 1991):

"Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" which takes into account the interests of diverse groups of people and the context. (p. 4)

First, what is meant by intellectually disciplined? According to Paul (1990) who makes a distinction between strong sense and weak sense critical thinking, it is the nature of the human mind to think spontaneously, continuously and pervasively, but it is not natural or easy to think critically about the standards and principles guiding thought. The mind must be intellectually disciplined in order to take into account the interests of diverse groups of people and to overcome natural tendencies to think egocentrically and sociocentrically. Paul (1990) regards the conception of narrow, weak sense critical thinking as skills related to logic and problem solving which can be applied to other learning, but remain extrinsic to the character of the person. Critical thinking in the strong sense is integrated within the individual with insight into the thinking and feeling processes; a major goal of adult education.

Second, the abilities to conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize or evaluate information involve the logical and problem solving aspects of critical thinking. This part of the definition acknowledges the internal processes of inductive and deductive reasoning that are essential to critical thinking.

Third, critical thinking is not solely intellectual activity. The last part of the definition acknowledges the reflective, communicative, experiential and practical aspects of critical thinking that guide belief and action within a social context. Merely analyzing the validity of arguments is not equivalent to critical thinking; rather, the professional must consider evidence found in the shared world through reflection and communication. Reflection encompasses emotive, behavioral and social aspects of critical thinking in the strong sense. Reflective critical thinkers are not merely intellectuals solving



problems, but are complex and developed adults who can embrace multiple perspectives, pluralism, cultural diversity, uncertainties, complexities, change and growth in the context of their work, relationships and everyday lives (Brookfield, 1987).

Finally, the practical, experiential and social aspects of critical thinking, acknowledge the uniqueness, uncertainty and complexity of professional practice. The last part of the definition also recognizes practical knowledge that is embedded in action and the social context as the interdependence of activity, concept and culture (Schon, 1987). Critical thinking in this sense is the basis of professional artistry.

#### The Problem

The current medical literature emphasizes the importance of critical thinking because processing information and making decisions are at the heart of clinical practice. The vast amounts of knowledge that continue to grow at exponential rates preclude any health practitioner from being an effective professional for very long if there is reliance solely on information acquired in school. To function effectively in today's complex health care delivery systems, it is increasingly important that professionals master the thinking and reasoning skills that are needed to process new and previous information in order to make decisions that guide their actions and beliefs.

Although the importance of studying, teaching and fostering critical thinking is widely evident in the current literature, the basis for achieving these goals is largely absent. Much of what is known and presumed about the nature of critical thinking is based upon research of students' cognitive performance within academic institutions of higher education and therefore, it is unclear how and if these skills transfer to the context of adults' professional practice. Despite repeated endorsements to teach and encourage critical thinking by respiratory care health professionals, we know very little about "what it is" or how it looks" in the context of respiratory care practice.

#### Research Methodology, Data Sources, and Data Analysis

A qualitative, descriptive research design was most appropriate for this study because the intent was to discover, understand and gain insight into critical thinking in respiratory care practice with the emphasis on process versus product. The focus of the study was to investigate these research questions as they relate to respiratory care practice: 1) What are the circumstances or situations which initiate or require critical thinking? and, 2) How are critical thinking skills used? The research methodology consisted primarily of observations of therapists followed by in-depth interviews. Therapists were observed working at eight different hospitals in 12 intensive care units. Observations allowed the primary investigator to witness firsthand how critical thinking emerges in practice at multiple settings. The observations served as a basis for identifying and describing context-bound situations which require critical thinking as well as the skills and characteristics.

A purposeful sample of 16 registered respiratory therapists who earned either a BS or AS Degree and had at least five years of experience was chosen. The sample was selected



through nominations of experts using a reputational-case selection. Data was collected over a period of one year during 125 hours of observations and 33 hours of interviews.

Over 600 pages of participant-observation fieldnotes and interview transcripts were continuously analyzed and interpreted throughout the study to identify meaning and content within the larger context. To understand practical knowledge, particularly at the expert level, it must be studied holistically (Benner, 1984). An inductive method of inquiry using the constant comparative approach, provided the opportunity to study the contextual as well as individual aspects of critical thinking embedded in clinical practice.

### Findings

The findings suggest that CT in respiratory care practice involves the abilities to: 1) prioritize the expected and the unexpected; 2) anticipate problems and solutions; 3) troubleshoot technical and process problems; 4) communicate according to the therapist's style and the situation; 5) negotiate patient care responsibilities and outcomes; 6) make individual, shared and consultative decisions; and, 7) reflect on the patients, the decisions and the profession.

Prioritizing is the ability to arrange scheduled work which is expected and to respond to evolving circumstances which are unexpected, according to their importance. CT in practice requires the therapists to plan and perform work in an optimal order, as well as the ability to make rapid adjustments according to the demands of the situation. During the observations, the therapists were often faced with conflicting demands and emergencies which required them to quickly make a judgement and act in the order of importance, sometimes working outside of the medical order. Prioritizing was most critical in settings where the therapists' roles were clearly delineated and the therapists carried a significant responsibility for airway and ventilator management. Prioritizing is "rapid think", which was described by the therapists as "being responsive", "quick on your feet" and "able to handle emergencies".

Anticipating involves the ability to foresee or think ahead so that problems can be avoided by the therapists' actions and so that solutions can happen earlier. Anticipating is "future think". The therapists in this study did not have a "wait and see" approach to their work, rather they were continuously and holistically assessing their patients, the data, the equipment and the situation in order to prevent problems and come up with solutions. The ability to anticipate was evident whenever the therapists made some modification or were faced with a new situation or patient. After making a change, the therapists would anticipate the desirable patient response. In a new situation, the therapists would anticipate what equipment they needed and what actions they would take. Anticipation was also used by the therapists to prepare what they intended to discuss with physicians. Anticipating differs from prioritizing where the emphasis is on responding quickly to a problem, because the intent is to avoid a problem in the first place.

Respiratory care is a highly technical profession, so it is

not surprising to find that CT in practice involves troubleshooting. Troubleshooting is "technical think" and refers to the ability to locate and correct technical or process problems. The therapists in this study were able to introduce new technology, modify equipment for novel care and correct equipment malfunction or breakdowns in the process of delivering respiratory care. Very few of the technical problems observed involved problem posing. Rather, it appeared that the therapists were able to use logical thinking and problem solving under most circumstances involving set-ups, alarms, or adjustments because they were familiar with the equipment and they generally knew what to do. The nurses and physicians relied on the therapists' technical expertise.

CT in practice requires the therapists to gather and share information needed for patient care through verbal and non-verbal communications with nurses, physicians, patients, families, and other clinicians. If the respiratory therapist can not communicate effectively, he or she will be unable to think critically because there will be insufficient information to interpret, analyze, evaluate, infer, judge, or explain. In other words, although a therapist can have developed cognitive abilities to critically analyze data, critical thinking is not possible in practice unless the person can communicate effectively to access and share information at the bedside. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the therapists in this study considered the ability to communicate to be the most important skill in their practice. It appears that communication skills including the ability to pick up on subtleties like tone of voice, body language and personalities of other health care workers is fundamental to critical thinking in practice. Communicating is "people think" and was described by the therapists as "knowing the doctors", "respecting the nurses", "reassuring the patients" and "mentoring clinicians".

CT in practice also requires the therapists to be able to negotiate patient care responsibilities and outcomes. Negotiating is discussing to impart information and ask questions in an attempt to make changes where the therapist does not have sole power or authority. Negotiating is "shared think". Cognitive performance on a clinical exam requires respiratory therapists to make the "right" clinical decision after assessing appropriate data. However, in actual practice the respiratory therapists must negotiate power through the medical order in order to have the opportunity to do what they believe is best for the patient under specific circumstances. If the respiratory therapist is unable to negotiate, there will be limited access to that therapist's unique expertise. In order to negotiate effectively, the therapists need adequate communication skills and the abilities to make judgments and explain how they came to their conclusions. It was interesting to find that all of the therapists in this study would make recommendations to physicians in the form of a question and often consulted with nurses and other respiratory therapists beforehand. The way the therapists communicated as well as when and how they negotiated was very much related to the particular physician. With certain

physicians and at some sites, the therapists did not make recommendations unless they believed a situation was life-threatening. Every respiratory therapist in this study said that it was important that you "know your doctors" and can "think like the doctors" before making recommendations. The therapists would modify their suggestions based upon the particular physician rather than their own preferences or best judgement.

Decision-making is the ability to reach a judgement or conclusion; making up one's mind. Decision-making is "personal think". The therapists made clinical decisions on their own, by sharing with nurses and physicians at the bedside and by consulting with others. These experts appeared to use gestalt thinking to get a grasp of the whole situation including vague subtleties, but they often could not explain how they made their decisions. Many of them referred to "having experience", "gut feelings" and "intuition" as a way of explaining their decisions. It was surprising to discover the amount and degree of mutual respect and cooperation that was observed between the nurses and therapists. The therapists and nurses would continuously ask one another questions, exchange information and share decision-making regarding patient care. The nurses and therapists would often discuss their ideas and suggestions with each other before approaching the physicians. When a unique problem was encountered, the therapists would pursue consultation beyond bedside interactions and would seek additional opinions from other respiratory therapists, supervisors, the medical director, physicians and even with clinicians at other hospitals.

Reflecting is the ability to think about one's thinking in order to examine assumptions, opinions, biases and decisions which is essential to CT. Reflection is "past think" or retrospective thinking as well as "inward think" or introspective thinking. Reflection by the therapists was evident in the ways they responded to questioning and often reconsidered during the observations and interviews saying "it depends", "each situation is different", and "there is more than one way to treat this." The therapists reflected on their work, patients, decisions and profession. Through reflection, the therapists were able to learn from mistakes and problems; cope with the pain of mistakes, sickness, and death; and derive satisfaction from caring for their patients and contributing to their profession. The therapists were able to describe how reflection changed over the course of their careers. As they became more experienced and made less mistakes, they tended to reflect less about their decisions. However, at the same time they began to reflect more about the broader context of their profession and health care. There are many rich examples of the ways the therapists were able to see things from others' perspectives and how they realized through reflection that there were grey zones to patient care which were open to multiple interpretations.

#### Implications and Conclusions

This study has practical significance and perhaps theoretical significance in adult education. The implications from this study are that situated cognition, reflection-in-action, authentic activity and problem posing should be explicit



components of professional curricula and continuing education in order to facilitate CT as described by this study. Other implications are that students and professionals must be given greater opportunities to self-direct their learning, engage in critical discourse and reflect on their practice within multidisciplinary frameworks. Traditional forms of learning do not provide opportunities for professionals to develop the CT abilities to prioritize, anticipate, communicate, negotiate, reflect and make decisions. Education which focuses on specific, discrete skill-acquisition within the isolated knowledge of one discipline can not adequately prepare professionals for the realities of practice. The results of this study can be used to develop innovative, interactive, performance models for preservice and continuing education to enhance CT and serve as a basis for education, training and evaluation. Furthermore, this study may contribute to gaps in critical thinking theory, a major theoretical framework in adult education, by focusing on actual performance in practice and the factors which enhance or limit CT. Additional data collection, analysis and interpretation will be performed in order to theorize the interrelationship between the CT skills, personal characteristics and organizational factors which can further describe CT in respiratory care practice.

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## THE ROLE OF INTUITION IN THE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Vivian Wilson Mott

**Abstract:** The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role of intuition in reflective adult education practice. While the study began with the assumption that intuition is deeply embedded in professional practice, the data further indicate that intuition aids in perception, guides practice, and enhances professional competence.

### Introduction

Various theorists have described the informal knowledge of professional practice as tacit (Polanyi, 1966), practical or experiential (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Clandinin & Connelly, 1991), or reflective (Schon, 1983, 1987). Polanyi, for example, argues that there are "things,...important things, that we cannot tell" (p.22) which inform the ways in which we think and act. Argyris and Schon suggest that one of the distinguishing elements of reflective practice is the recognition and articulation of one's theories-in-use, which are often intuitive and largely unexamined. And Clandinin, Connelly and others argue that the experience, practical intelligence and "gut feeling" which practitioners bring to their work constitute a great deal of the repertoire of professional expertise. Although each of these conceptual frameworks provides a basis for beginning to understand our reflective practice, none of them entirely accounts for the complexity or spontaneity of knowing in reflective adult education practice.

While practitioners themselves may recognize the complexity of their knowing, they are often unaware, or poorly articulate exactly *how* they come to know and behave in practice. Even when unable to articulate its origin or nature, however, most acknowledge an intuitive dimension to their knowledge, that some behavior is "innate, subjective, intuitive, holistic...that is not amenable to explicit formulation" (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p.183). Schon (1983, 1987) emphasizes, however, that our inability to describe our knowing-in-action does not render that artful practice any less valid or valuable. He suggests that part of being a reflective practitioner is "intuitive knowing in the midst of action and sometimes us[ing] this capacity to cope with the unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice" (1983, p.viii-ix). According to Schon, intuition is part of what enables us to practice in the "swamp" of novel, challenging or ambiguous circumstances in practice.

In spite of such affirmation and the common use of terms such as *instinct*, *gut-feeling*, and *intuition*, the use of intuition in practice is minimally recognized as a legitimate possibility, much less understood or nurtured. Reber (1989) observes that "there is probably no cognitive process that suffers from such a gap between phenomenological reality and scientific understanding" (p.232). Bruner concurs that "our failure to recognize the importance and power of intuitive methods in all fields of inquiry" (1971, p.96) results in our intuition "going underground to become part of...secret intellectual life" (p.91). The lack of acknowledgment and understanding is due in part to the construct of intuition itself. Intuition has been variously described - and sometimes poorly defined - through pre-historical constructs of mysticism, Eastern and Western philosophy, various religious doctrine, psychology, and even neurophysiology. Since the

interpretation of intuition - like cognition and intelligence - is a social construct, its meaning, use and value are also significantly influenced by personal, sociological and cultural factors. Therefore, not only one's personal understanding and interpretation of intuition, but its use and perceived validity will vary according to these different influences.

### **Purpose of the Study**

As a complex and multi-dimensional human capacity, intuition appears to both contribute to, and be differentiated from other forms of knowing. Yet, little is actually known about the nature of intuition, the factors which influence it, or even how it works. Virtually nothing exists regarding the role of intuition in the reflective practice of adult education. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore the role of intuition in reflective adult education practice. I specifically sought to understand: (a) how practitioners define and interpret intuition; (b) the ways in which practitioners use their intuitive capacity, including what tendencies, practice settings, and circumstances nurture or inhibit its use in practice; and, (c) the development of intuition in reflective practitioners.

### **Methodology**

The interpretation of intuition is socially constructed, and influenced by varying theoretical foundations. Additionally, its use in reflective practice is complex and largely unexamined, even by the practitioner. Therefore, the exploratory, inductive strategies of qualitative research were appropriate for discovering meaning and capturing the dynamics of the phenomenon. A specific form of qualitative inquiry, phenomenology, provided the holistic understanding of the interpretations and roles of intuition from the personal and contextual perspectives of those practitioners who experience it.

As a particular research methodology, phenomenology emerged largely from the philosophical ideals of Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl, late 19th century German mathematician and philosopher. One of the key principles in Husserl's ongoing development of phenomenology as a means of philosophical inquiry was the examination and suspension of all assumptions about the nature of any reality (Husserl, 1931, 1964). Three terms evolved from this concept of phenomenological inquiry: *epochè*, reduction, and bracketing. *Epochè*, borrowed from the Greek skeptics, refers to the questioning of assumptions in order to fully examine a phenomenon. Reduction is simply the consideration of only the basic elements of an inquiry without concern for what is trivial or accidental. Bracketing describes the differential setting aside of some portion of an inquiry, so as to look at the whole. These three metaphorical elements are often used synonymously to explain the suspended judgment necessary for phenomenological inquiry.

The primary focus of phenomenology as a research methodology is the understanding of the essential structures and meanings of lived experience from the unique perspectives of those engaged in the phenomenon. Phenomenological inquiry involves (a) the study of a personally or socially significant phenomenon which (b) is investigated as a natural experience, rather than as a conceptualization, (c) unencumbered by assumptions, preconceptions, or interpretation, and with the (d) goal of explicating characteristic and essential themes (Patton, 1990; van Manen, 1990).

The purposeful selection of twelve individuals for this research was based on three criteria. The first two and most important criteria were that those selected be actively engaged in adult education practice, and considered experienced, reflective practitioners. Following recommendation from colleagues and faculty, practitioners were then chosen from a variety of educational settings (administration, higher education, literacy, health education, government, business and industrial training, continuing professional education, and proprietary training) in order to achieve maximum variation. This diversity in practice settings increased representativeness and provided for differences in context and attitude toward intuition, as well as varying degrees of autonomy regarding decision making and problem solving in practice. The five women and seven men represent small proprietary companies, large national associations, large and small academic institutions, hospitals and volunteer organizations in the Midwest, South, and Eastern United States. One of the women is African-American; one male is Persian.

Data were collected from observations, in-depth conversational interviews, participant and researcher journals, and other relevant document review, such as course syllabi, curricula guides, or planning memoranda. Data were analyzed concurrently through the constant comparative method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), with particular attention given to the unique phenomenological inquiry steps of *epochè*, reduction, and bracketing. Data analysis centered on uncovering thematic categories of intuitive experience which emerged from the information shared. These core themes became the focus of my own intuitive exploration and reflection during subsequent engagement with the data. Participants in the research were actively engaged in review and clarification as we explored the interpretations, uses, developmental processes and inhibitions involved in their intuitive experiences. Additionally, member checks and peer consultations with colleagues and committee members were continually employed throughout the data collection and analysis process.

### Findings and Discussion

Intuition is deeply embedded but quite recognizable in reflective practice. It is one way many adult educators turn seemingly inconclusive pieces of information and isolated feelings into integrated, holistic understanding and action in practice. The following findings are organized in three major sections: First, the often metaphorical interpretations of intuition in reflective practice are presented, largely in the form of the participants' own voices. Second, the role of intuition in practice is addressed. Finally, suggestions are offered by the participants for the development and nurturance of intuitive ability.

#### "...like a fact in a book...a blinking light...outlying pockets of data...a golden key":

While it may also be the case of all reflective practitioners, the participants in this study were contextual, holistic thinkers, highly receptive to stimuli in their practice environment, and exceptionally articulate. Many of them expressed difficulty, however, in adequately explaining their intuition, its manifestation and dimensions. Rather, each of them spoke of their intuition in simple, yet eloquent metaphorical terms.

During one participant interview, Paula resisted defining her intuition by saying, "it's not a boxable thing. It's very, very deep, like a *vine growing and coming out*." Paula drew both hands up from her lap, waving her fingers as she extended her hands up and out, indeed like a vine

growing out of her very being. As I listened to her wonderfully visual and emotive comparison, I remembered that others had similarly described their intuition in metaphorical terms. One had quickly drawn a pattern of dots and interconnecting lines which represented not only the "millions of stars" he saw on a clear night, but the infinite "*outlying pockets of data...pieces of previously stored, perhaps seemingly unrelated data*" to which we have access. Intuition, he argued, means, "being open to when information comes forward, to realize that it means something." A nurse educator described her intuition as a "*bridge between people and thoughts*" as she explained an intuitive response to a patient:

I sensed that she needed to talk about something else....I began to recall the things she had said, things she didn't say, think about the way she acted, her husband's confusion. I remembered other similar experiences. Things didn't fit, until it clicked. That's intuition.

Others depicted their intuition as "*a light that clicks on in your brain,*" a "*signal blinking in one's belly,*" "*a shield that comes down to stop me,*" and "*churning ideas that make me think again.*"

Some participants used metaphors to explain how their intuition functioned, rather than describe it. For instance, Steve depicted his intuition as "insight" and "gut feeling" which drew upon his experience and knowledge to form more synergistic and accurate representations of situations. "*It's like a flow, yes, like a river,* of experience and knowing in my mind. More than recall, it's quick and fluid." In describing how intuition facilitated the daily management of various projects, Terry used the metaphor of a "*bubbling cauldron*" of "seething projects":

Bits and pieces of the broth bubble up and out of the cauldron to the top and into the air... whatever is necessary to do now bubbles up to the top...and rises to the surface when it's supposed to. And it's some other force back there that's doing it.

And while Ed's metaphoric description wasn't the last I heard, it was one of the more provocative:

A metaphor would be kind of the *golden key*. It's the ability to open a door that is locked typically, and you've got a passkey to open it up. And furthermore, it will open up the successive doors that always lie behind the first door that you open. It's the revealing of further mysteries.

**The Role of Intuition in Reflective Practice:** The rich shared data in this research reveal several other points of commonality among the participants regarding their interpretation and use of intuition in practice. Intuition is accepted as a legitimate, if not often discussed or well understood, aspect of reflective practice. Its use is highly situational and transfers across fields of expertise or areas of professional practice. Intuition is felt to be largely automatic, often recognized only upon reflection. And while intuition often follows periods of incubation, reflection or solitude, its occurrence seems to be uniformly related to interactions with people.

The twelve participants in this study shared explicit examples of their intuition at work in practice, and explored further instances in which intuition was the initiator of practice knowledge or behavior. Intuition plays three distinct roles in the reflective practice of these educators:



1. Intuition aids in the presentation and synthesis of perception. (Perception for these practitioners entails both formal and informal learning, memory, experience and understanding.) Dimensions of this role of intuition include the spontaneous generation of ideas, the prompted recall of embedded memory, and the access of tacit knowledge. Intuition also helps these practitioners sort and categorize information, in the assessment of situations and "reading people" for instance. By integrating stimuli for greater understanding, conceptualization and the merging of ideas into new or different concepts, intuition also encourages holistic thinking, or a "sense of the gestalt." And finally, intuition serves as a catalyst for exploration, encouraging "thinking beyond the obvious."

2. Intuition guides practice. Aspects of this role of intuition in reflective practice include promoting problem posing and reframing, as well as encouraging creative problem solving. As such, intuition both informs conscious, deliberated decision-making, and is considered the source of spontaneous decisions. Participants also speak of their intuition affirming their decisions and enabling what several term "anticipatory planning." Another important aspect of guiding practice is that intuition initiates and fosters adjustments-in-action, a step beyond even the reflection-in-action advocated by Schon (1983, 1987). For instance, these practitioners feel that intuition increases their sensitivity to people and situations in practice, and helps them monitor and respond appropriately to feedback from others in their environment. They expressed conviction that their intuition prompts them to alter teaching strategies, and enables them to mediate challenges, and respond to novel situations in practice.

3. Intuition enhances professional competence. The two previously outlined functions of intuition in reflective practice lead to a third role. These practitioners feel their professional competence is further developed through strengthened interpersonal skills, enhanced self-confidence, and encouraged reflection. According to David, intuition "prompts my reflection. It builds my confidence....I've got this extra edge to work with."

**Development of Intuitive Ability:** There is general consensus among the practitioners that while "not everyone identifies, realizes, or taps into it," intuition is an innate and universal human capacity which can be developed and nurtured. Although "restrictive...authoritative" environments with "pressures of performance and production...emphasis on empirical, provable, demonstrable action" often stifle intuitive ability, "being sensitive, open and trusting of it...having it valued and modelled" increases one's faith in and use of intuition in practice. Paula added:

Every time I listen to this sense in my body, it leads me on a path to a comfortable place....I believe it's what I'm supposed to do at the time, given the circumstances....What I've learned is that if I accept and trust it, it's there and it doesn't fail me. I've learned to listen.

### Summary

In 1977, Bruner observed that we know very little about our intuitive abilities, the nature of intuition, or the factors which influence it. He urged that "research on the topic cannot be delayed until such a time as a pure and unambiguous definition of intuitive thinking is possible, along with precise techniques for identifying intuition when it occurs" (p.59). In partial answer

to this challenge, this study sought to explore the role of intuition in the reflective practice of adult educators. Because of the personal interpretations, theoretical and socio-cultural influences which impact one's understanding and use of intuition, a phenomenological method of inquiry was chosen to capture the dynamics of the phenomenon. The intuitive experiences and shared reflections of twelve reflective practitioners of adult education revealed three distinct roles of intuition in reflective practice: aiding in the presentation and synthesis of perception, guiding practice, and enhancing professional competence. It is expected that ongoing analysis will further the understanding of this crucial element of reflective practice.

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## Tackling Adult Innumeracy

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Twenty-five years ago, the traditional educational response to adult illiteracy was simply framed in two key questions: Was whole language or phonics the correct approach? Which textbooks were most useful? There was little attempt to place illiteracy in any historical, cultural, or social context, or to greatly consider the needs and aims of adult learners. Today such notions seem hopelessly reductive, and yet educators largely perpetuate a similarly inadequate response to an equally grave problem--adult innumeracy. The urgency of addressing innumeracy demands more creative approaches to mathematics education for adults.

### Adult Innumeracy

Over the last decade, various researchers have identified that innumeracy affects many adults in both North America (National Research Council, 1989; Statistics Canada, 1991) and Britain (Cockcroft, 1986). They claim that adults' lack of understanding of mathematical concepts and procedures restricts achievement by affecting access to further education, job selection and career advancement, and limits adults' ability to respond to changing workplace requirements (Handler, 1990). Thus, innumeracy can also be psychologically disabling, undermining people's self-esteem and confidence in their constructive skills and critical insights. Furthermore, this unease with numbers can lead adults to be susceptible to the "mystique" of mathematics (derived from its apparent conciseness, precision, abstraction, and objectivity), and often, therefore, overly dependent on the views of "experts" (Evans, 1989).

In discussing the problem of adult innumeracy many commentators have developed the concept of "mathematics anxiety." This has been described most rigorously as "a psychological state engendered when a person experiences (or expects to experience) a loss of self-esteem in confronting a situation involving mathematics" (Michael, 1981, p. 58). Most discussion traces the cause of mathematics anxiety to the deficiencies in K-12 mathematics education with its concentration on the technical acquisition of a pre-determined set of basic skills and knowledge, an abstract and decontextualized approach, rote memorization of theories and formulae, relentless calculations, the primacy of the correct solution, and constant testing. It is worth noting that these are also often features of adult mathematics classrooms despite the considerable evidence that adults learn more successfully by different methods. Frankenstein (1981) notes that "too many teachers baby-sit instead of helping students learn; too many teachers convey their own hatred or fear of mathematics to their students; the mathematics curriculum is irrelevant to students' lives; the math curriculum is boring" (p. 11).

As a result, adult learners often have a view of mathematics as "rigid, removed, and aloof rather than [a subject] that is being discovered and developed" (Buerk, 1985, p. 65). Traditional methods of teaching mathematics convince adults that they are stupid and inferior because they can't do mental arithmetic, that they have no knowledge to share, and that they are cheating if they work with others. When mathematics is presented as a one-way transmission of knowledge from teachers, it can be regarded merely as collections of facts and answers. Adult learners see mathematical knowledge as largely separate from

themselves and their thought processes, and they experience education as a static, rather than a dynamic, process.

Socially, these approaches are glaringly inadequate in reducing innumeracy, particularly among already disadvantaged groups. There is evidence that prevailing teaching methodologies particularly discourage women (Burtcn, 1986), members of certain ethnic minorities (Campbell, 1989), and the working class (Singh, 1986) from learning mathematics. Frankenstein (1981) identifies how the dominant structures and hegemonic ideologies of society result in these different groups being more affected than others. "Intellectual stereotyping leads many people to believe that learning mathematics is too hard for them; meaningless, boring school work serves to prepare people for meaningless, boring jobs" (p. 11). Given that the existing curricula and classroom practices are cited as contributing to, rather than reducing innumeracy, it is imperative that adult educators consider other approaches.

### A More Contextual Approach: Radical Education

Adult literacy work blossomed when researchers and practitioners began to regard illiteracy in its historical, cultural, and social contexts, and centered attention on the specific needs and aims of both individual, and groups of, learners. Innumeracy can also be addressed more contextually. As an example, consider the approach offered by radical education.

A radical approach to education involves a notion of what it means to be educated, not in a universal sense, but in relation to social and cultural objectives. It is based on the view that education is not ideologically neutral, and that any educational system incorporates biases which reflect the views and interests of those in possession of social, economic, and political power. Radical education seeks to utilize education to bring about social, political, and economic changes in society. Radical educators are particularly critical of "traditional" schooling which they see as designed to, first, socialize people into accepting the broad values of society by fulfilling specific roles within that society, and, second, to reproduce the existing economic, status, and power hierarchies.

Radical adult educators use a "dialogic" and "problem-posing" approach to learning. In this approach, students and teachers participate as co-learners. Identifying and analyzing problematic aspects of learners' current situations, including historical and cultural influences, "provides the curriculum of problems which are to be discussed in the educational process" (Elias & Merriam, 1980, p. 156). The problem-posing process draws on individual personal experiences, identifies commonalties among others' experiences, and seeks to uncover assumptions about why these commonalties exist. This method involves what Freire (1972) calls "praxis": an active, ongoing, and alternating process of investigation, exploration, and reflection.

So, how would such an approach work for mathematics education? Consider the prevalence of mathematics anxiety, the misconceptions held about mathematics, and the subterfuges innumerate people go through to hide their "inadequacies." A traditional approach to education would locate the problem of innumeracy and seek to remedy it at the individual level. This approach--"blaming the victim"--seems to imply that it is learners, rather than the curricula or methods to which they have been exposed, that need to be cured. A radical approach to mathematics education would analyze how mathematics functions in society, at both an individual and societal level. Niss (cited in Ernest, 1991) proposes that mathematics education should "enable students to realize, understand, judge, utilize, and



perform the application of math in society, in particular to solutions which are of significance to their private, social, and professional lives" (p. 206). Such an approach, precisely because it is grounded in people's practical lives, would inevitably confront larger social issues in which adults are affected by their limitations and unease with mathematics.

For example, Fasheh's work (1982) with uneducated adults and with schoolteachers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank stresses the importance of considering different interpretations of the mathematics present in learners' everyday lives. He describes how in one course, women learners were each asked to keep a daily record of the time they spent cooking, cleaning, washing, and taking care of children; in another, workers were each asked to draw maps of their neighborhood (a battle zone) for a visiting friend and describe their preferred routes to get from one site to another. In each case, what had been seen as a routine and non-problematic task produced widely differing results and began a series of class discussions about using mathematics in everyday situations and activities. For a more local example, adult learners could consider where discrepancies exist between wages earned by male and female workers doing similar jobs, or in the jobs performed by those from differing racial backgrounds. Adults can easily develop mathematical activities based upon their experiences from their own workplaces, which can lead to the compilation and analysis of statistics of class, race and gender inequalities at work. In applying basic mathematical techniques to problems they have identified from their real lives, adults can come to understand not only greater aspects of mathematics, but also more about the social contexts which make their individual and collective lives more meaningful (Giroux, 1989). Such an approach leads to reconceptualizing what we call mathematics.

### Reconceptualizing Mathematics

Amongst mathematics educators there is a growing recognition that mathematics is not a body of objective truth, but a personal and social construct (Ernest, 1991; Lakatos, 1976; National Research Council, 1989). All cultural groups generate their own mathematical ideas; Western mathematics is only one mathematics among many. The study of the socio-cultural roots, development, and biases of mathematics have been recently discussed by, among others, Bishop (1988), D'Ambrosio (1991), Henderson (1981), and Joseph (1987). Two aspects that may interest adult educators are the notions that mathematics is more than simply arithmetic, and the concept of "ethnomathematics."

Mathematics is more than arithmetic. In Western culture, mathematics is commonly regarded either as a fixed set of abstract and unchallengeable scientific truths, or as the supreme example of a scientific and rational mode of thought. In each case there is "a general disinclination to locate mathematics in a materialistic base and thus link its development with economic, political, and cultural changes" (Joseph, 1987). However, mathematics can be viewed--as it was within ancient Greek, Chinese, Indian and Arabic cultures--as a dynamic body of knowledge relating to many areas of human understanding, and one capable of, and subject to, interpretation. Henderson (1981) claims modern mathematics is not only a series of techniques for solving analytic problems, but also a way of perceiving beauty, order, and unity.

Mathematics can also be seen as a cultural product, developed as a result of activities by people in every cultural group, and dependent upon environment, activities, motivations, and forms of communication (Bishop, 1988). Although different forms of mathematics are generated by different cultural groups, they are the result of broadly similar activities. Bishop identifies six fundamental mathematical activities which he regards as universal, necessary, and sufficient for the development of mathematical knowledge. Imagine a conventional definition of "arithmetic" and then compare it these six activities:

- Counting*: the use of a systematic way to compare and order discrete phenomena [such as] tallying, using objects...to record, or special number words or names;
- Locating*: exploring one's spatial environment and conceptualizing and symbolizing that environment with models, diagrams, drawings, words, or other means;
- Measuring*: quantifying amounts for the purposes of comparison and ordering, using objects or tokens as measuring devices;
- Designing*: creating a shape for an object or for any part of one's spatial environment;
- Playing*: devising and engaging in games and pastimes, with more or less formal rules; and
- Explaining*: finding ways to account for the existence of phenomena (pp. 182-183).

Additionally, to effectively address adult innumeracy and its prevalence among certain social groups, it is also important to recognize unquestioned assumptions about mathematics. Henderson (1981) identifies how the common Western view of mathematics reflects "the people in charge of mathematics...[who] have been mostly Western (white), upper/middle class males" (p. 13). As an example, he cites one mathematical idea--the Saccheri quadrilateral--which instead of being named after the person (a Persian) who first introduced the ideas to the world (in Arabic), is instead named after the person (an Italian Christian) who first translated the idea into a Western language. In this way the development of mathematics becomes seen as a uniquely Western phenomenon, and the contribution of non-Western mathematicians is ignored or treated as less significant. Such ethnocentrism often masks or marginalizes the mathematical activities of indigenous people. Yet it is precisely the mathematical traditions present in different cultures which can allow "entry" to the subject of mathematics for those who see themselves as innumerate.

**Ethnomathematics.** D'Ambrosio (1991) uses the term "ethnomathematics" to describe "the art or technique of understanding, explaining, learning about, coping with, and managing the natural, social, and political environment by relying on processes like counting, measuring, sorting, ordering, and inferring" (p. 45). Ethnomathematics, which links cultural anthropology, cognitive psychology (in its focus on learning in a social context), and mathematics, can challenge the dichotomy between "practical" and "abstract" mathematical knowledge. It forces learners to consider others' thinking patterns, to re-examine what has been labeled "non-mathematical," and to reconceptualize what counts as mathematical knowledge. For example, Ascher (1991) looks at the mathematical ideas in certain non-Western cultures, such as the spatial ordering and number system used by the Inca people. Gerdes (1988) focuses on the mathematics "frozen" in the historical and current everyday practices of traditional Mozambican craftsmen, whose baskets, weavings, houses, and fish-traps often demonstrate complex mathematical thinking, as well as the most efficient solutions to construction problems. Finally, Lave (1988) considers the mathematical experiences inherent in common workplace and domestic activities. For example, she compares adults' abilities to solve mathematical problems arising from grocery-shopping in a supermarket, with their performance on similar problems in a pencil-and-paper arithmetic test. The participants' scores on the arithmetic test (which averaged 59%), compared with 98%--virtually error free--arithmetic in the supermarket. Lave argues that test-taking and grocery-shopping are very different activities and people use different methods in different situations to solve similar arithmetic problems.

Drawing upon the mathematical traditions present in different cultures and basing mathematical activities on adults' day-to-day experiences of their social and physical environments can broaden the traditional and often narrow approach of much mathematics education. Furthermore, it can bring the learning of mathematics "into contact with a wide variety of disciplines, including art and design, history, and social studies, which it

conventionally ignores. Such a holistic approach would serve to augment rather than fragment [adults'] understanding and imagination." (Joseph, 1987, p. 27).

Adults exposed to these broader definitions and practices of mathematics can begin to analyze their own mathematical knowledge and realize that they already know more mathematics than traditional evaluations reveal. Similarly, adult learners asked to consider others' ethnomathematics learn that different cultures define mathematical concepts and methods differently, and that exploring the mathematics of others provides a rich illustration of applied mathematical concepts. These two factors alone contribute greatly to adults' confidence in learning from their own experience and in their own learning abilities.

### Conclusion

Most of the published discussion about adult innumeracy reflects the viewpoints of academic and business leaders--those with power in society--and rarely those of the learners and teachers who are most closely involved. These dominant views privilege those whose interest lies in maintaining the status quo and legitimate the current traditional approach to mathematics education. Yet it is precisely this same approach that has been identified as so ineffective against adult innumeracy.

Finally, two crucial aspects of a more radical approach to mathematics education for adults are the attitudes and behavior of teachers towards both adult learners and subject content. Though some curricula materials exist, to date, research on actual teaching is still sparse and/or too tightly focused to be discussed beyond theoretical dimensions. However, the efficacy of these approaches in the face of overwhelming urgency to address adult innumeracy marks these as the most thoughtful and innovative methods in mathematics education. As such they deserve considerable study, and represent a compelling parallel to the deepening of research on, and practice of, literacy education over the past two decades.

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Instructors-As-Researchers-and-Theorists: Action  
Research in a Community College

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**Abstract:** Instructors in a community college engaged in reflective practice undertook action research projects in order to improve their teaching practices. Collaborative inquiry and learning resulted in individual and collective change in assumptions, ideas and practices.

Introduction

Reflective practitioners study their practice in order to improve it. Study means some form of research, so the reflective practitioner is also a researcher. How the research is done is up to the person and his or her practice situation, but usually, the reflective practitioner would choose to do research that allows him or her to understand the "why" behind their actions. This kind of research would allow the practitioner to continually identify and examine assumptions, beliefs, values and other forms of knowledge that he or she draws upon to make decisions about what to do and how to do it, and to seek change in those areas of knowledge which prove dysfunctional in terms of good practice. Practitioners who do this can be understood to be engaged in some form of action research. Action research is both a mode of inquiry and a mode of learning. As a mode of inquiry, it encompasses a wide range of mainly phenomenological and ethnomethodological options. As a mode of learning, action research involves both individual and collective, or collaborative, learning.

This paper describes an action research project undertaken by a group of community college instructors who are interested in learning how to improve their teaching practices. The project serves as a prototype for a consortium of reflective practitioners whose goal is to help their public and private organizations develop into learning organizations. This description includes some of the outcomes of the project in terms of changes in instructors' thinking and things learned about the particular inquiry and learning process.

Description of the Process

Seven instructors voluntarily formed a "collaborative inquiry group" (CIG) for the purpose of exploring ways each member might improve his or her practice. Teaching areas represented in the group included Biology, Physics, Psychology, Economics, Reading, and Developmental Studies. The group meet bi-weekly over a period of 18 months. The author of this paper was asked to join and facilitate the group, based on his interest in faculty

development and reflective practice. The group decided to adopt a collaborative mode of inquiry and learning that would give direction to their reflective practice.

Two principal activities were undertaken by the group. In the first activity, each instructor initiated a change in one of his or her courses with the intention of learning from the change and improving the related teaching activity. For example, one instructor decided to give his students a choice of three different forms of exams, consistent with the students' own learning styles. Another instructor tried several different ways of increasing student participation in class discussions. An instructor added group discussion to her Biology lab exercises.

In the second activity, the facilitator employed a phenomenological interview and analysis technique to gather descriptions of each instructor's actions and reasoning as the instructor initiated the change in his or her practice. The technique, called the "Action-Reason-Thematic Technique" (ARTT), is designed to uncover an interviewee's beliefs, motives, rules and factual knowledge that constitute his or her reasons for taking some form of action (Peters, 1991). The type of knowledge involved is practical knowledge and the unit of analysis is the content and structure of reasons that drive decisions. In this case, the interview questions (of a "what did you do" and "why did you do it" variety) are intended to produce a rich description of instructor thinking as it drives his or her selection of actions intended to increase student learning. The instructor's answers to the what and why questions are audio-taped and transcribed verbatim for analysis. A new cycle of interviews and analysis follows the first and subsequent interviews.

The two activities merged into a third, in the form of CIG meetings. Each instructor's intended change in his or her course served as a topic for dialogue at the CIG meetings. Interview transcripts were read by CIG participants and the ensuing dialogue constituted an analysis of the actions and reasons described in the interview transcript. The level of dialogue soon reached a level of inquiry that accommodated CIG members' interests in teaching and learning, despite the differences in their subject matter interests.

Literature on teaching and learning also served as a source of information on which discussion and dialogue are based. Most of the literature sources contained one or more formal theories about a specific aspect of teaching and learning. CIG members blended discussion of formal theory from these sources with their own informal theories of teaching and learning. Thus, the dialogues and discussions in CIG meetings focused on actions taken by instructors, on their theories of teaching and learning related to these particular actions, and on their more general theories of teaching and learning.

## Results

At least six themes ran through the results of the project. **First**, all members of the CIG (including the author/facilitator) learned new ideas about teaching that they were able to apply in their own courses. **Second**, most members changed some of their assumptions about teaching and learning, in the context of their respective practices. **Third**, all learned more about themselves personally and professionally as a result of participating in the process. **Fourth**, the CIG members learned some things about the collaborative process itself that could transfer into their own practices. **Fifth**, most developed what for them was a new viewpoint about research on teaching and learning (an interpretive viewpoint). **Sixth**, the CIG activities seemed to follow a developmental process marked by distinctive stages and levels of inquiry and learning.

Some of these outcomes are illustrated by the following selected examples:

A Biology instructor decided to require her students to write abstracts of "outside" readings related to Biology. She revised the guidelines for students to use in preparing abstracts based on her own and CIG members' ideas, but she was not pleased by the students' responses to her assignment. It appeared to the Biology instructor that students were not following instructions to the letter of her requirements, but most of all, they were not demonstrating that they had learned from the experience. When her own interview responses were probed by the CIG, the instructor revealed that her criteria for student learning included evidence of "critical thinking," and that the students should see the relevancy of the subject matter to real-life situations.

A lot of dialogue and discussion took place concerning what she meant by critical thinking and relevancy (including readings on the topic of critical thinking). Discussion and dialogue began to turn on the instructor's own way of thinking about science in general, vis-a-vis her expectations of students and how they should think about this area of science. The instructor eventually realized that her thinking and the "relevancy" of student's thinking were in conflict. In the classroom, she thought like a scientist - orderly, formally and logically, evincing precision in thinking and in her guidelines. However, the kind of thinking she was asking the students to engage in was practical thinking, if they were to discover in Biology some relevancy to their everyday lives. Students could not think formally and read casually and think practically about Biology - especially if they were being graded on their ability to engage in formal thinking.

Over time, and during several CIG discussions about this topic and related others (e.g., how to "cover required material"), the



instructor widened the scope of her expectations of students in terms of their thinking skills. She dropped the expectation that students become critical thinkers exclusively in terms of science and the use of the scientific method, but while she continued to insist that students think critically, her own concept of "thinking" now included practical thought as well as formal thought. She later reported that students indeed began to show more interest in the subject, not because they were planning to become biologists like the instructor, but because they could find meaning in the subject in terms of its connection to their everyday reality.

A **second** example involved another Biology instructor, who set out (for the first time) to incorporate group discussion into her lab exercises, in order to increase the chances that students would find meaning in the material being covered in lab work. However, for this instructor, content and factual information had to come first in the process of enabling the students to understand concepts and to think critically, and transmittal of facts (primarily by lecture) was important. She was faced with a time vs coverage of content dilemma - and she faced an "unrealistic expectation that the students would have time to finish the lab exercises and also have time for group discussion." Time constraints resulted in the group discussion activity being "added on" to the total lab time, not integrated into the exercise itself. Moreover, the instructor was disappointed when only a few students reported that they had learned from the discussion groups, and she was disappointed in students' reluctance to share their ideas and interpretations of lab exercises with other students.

This same instructor was asked by CIG members to work as a member of a team of CIG members and "train" other instructors at the college who are interested in forming their own CIG's. The instructor demurred, claiming that she was not prepared to help others act in a reflective manner, that she needed to know much more about the details of such a program before she could be comfortable helping others learn the process. She went on to explain that, for her, while learning the subject was relatively easy, she anticipated that teaching it would be very difficult. When her reasoning for this was discussed further, she realized that she had been judging her own role vis-a-vis student roles in the same way - she found teaching to be enjoyable but hard, and she assumed that, given proper instruction, students would find it relatively easy to learn Biology. Part of her reflection on this belief was based on a dialogue with the other Biology instructor, who claimed that she considered teaching as somewhat difficult at times, but for her, learning a new subject was more difficult. Suddenly, the reluctant instructor saw her student discussion groups in the same frame. She realized that she had asked students to help other students learn aspects of Biology, and in public as well, which put them in a role similar to the one she was being asked to assume as a member of an instructional team for other faculty in the college. Her perspective on



student involvement was changed at that point, and she began to develop other strategies for involving students in classroom activities.

A third example concerns the value of the collaborative process as its own best example of collaborative activities in classrooms. A Physics instructor chose to increase student involvement in class discussions, as opposed to his regular practice of doing almost all of the talking in class. He was able to see in his own interaction with colleagues in the CIG an example of how discussion and dialogue works. His characterization of the process was as follows:

I concluded that everything could be collaborative inside a collaborative. It's like a collaborative thing, a daughter of another broader collaborative. This is the ideal I formed from this and eventually it boils down to the more things are discussed, the more the gain...between the instructor and the students and among the instructors themselves.

A fourth example relates to the shift in viewpoint about the nature of inquiry. A Psychology instructor decided to try three different forms of tests, giving students a choice of the three, on the assumption that students would choose the form of test best suited to their style of learning. His experience with the interviews and group discussion and dialogue about the thinking behind his decisions and actions led him to make the following observation about the inquiry and learning modes involved:

I have been trained to approach research by coming up with an idea, testing it, analyzing results, moving on to another idea. Reflective practice involves looking at what one is doing, and looking at that practice from several angles. Looking at relationships between practices and underlying assumptions. A new way of thinking. Always before, I looked at assumptions on the front end, and did a project based on those assumptions. Now I look at what I am doing and then look in a deeper way the reasons for what I am doing. Talk about it with two or three other people, let them examine your assumptions. Let them examine what you're doing, what you're attempting to do and then try it again, based upon that information with modification if it didn't achieve what you had hoped it would achieve.

A fifth example illustrates the influence of the process itself as a personal and professional growth experience. One of the Biology instructors had this to say one year after her project was conducted:

The group allowed me to see that there were lots of ideas out there - that there were no rights and wrongs. They questioned me, for sure, but they never told me that I was wrong. There is (in the collaborative process) the support

angle, the materials and ideas angle, the discussion and brainstorming angle, but this group is not simple! The group is like a real high for me. It is intellectual stimulation. And it is the only time in my life that I am getting this.

Related to the **sixth** theme mentioned above, the process of inquiry and learning experienced by the CIG followed a developmental path described by several writers on organizational learning (Bohm, 1980; Isaacs, 1993; Schein, 1993; Senge, 1991). These writers describe a process of dialogue which is characterized by levels and stages of development, a process which they claim is the means by which collective learning can occur. For example, the CIG members went through an initial stage of frustration and fragmented discussion, without clear direction or acknowledged purpose. Instructors brought to the discussion a variety of world views, assumptions and perspectives on teaching and learning. They had to learn to explore this range of assumptions and to lay out their thinking for examination by their peers. They also had to learn to suspend their own assumptions and to examine their role in creating or removing obstacles to dialogue. They eventually reached a stage of trust and openness that allowed the "conversation...to flow in a new way" (Isaacs, p.37). At this stage instructors inquired together as a whole, and allowed new insights to occur. They were able to watch themselves inquire and learn, and to observe the process evolve. Individuals felt supported and were challenged to probe the subtleties of their thinking - about their practice and about the process itself. The process of inquiry and learning became its own example of inquiry and learning, and the CIG members could move comfortably within it.

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## THE RISE AND FALL OF LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION: CSLEA AT MID-CENTURY

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**Abstract:** Drawing from archival sources concerning the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults (CSLEA), and from secondary literature about the 1950s and 1960s, an analysis is made of the contextual forces that influenced the growth and the demise of CSLEA. This research was made possible in part by support from the Syracuse University Kellogg Project.

This study is the third stage of a research project that focuses upon American philosophy of adult education during the 1950s and 1960s and how it was affected by changes in the professional field and in the U.S. society. The three stages reflect participation in three Research-in Progress Conferences in History of Adult Education during 1990 - 1993, drawing upon the Special Collections at Syracuse University. This third study focuses on Liberal Adult Education through an analysis of the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults (CSLEA).

The theoretical framework for this study follows that of my recent scholarship, integrating dimensions of macro and occupational cultures into the historical analysis (Podeschi, 1989, 1991, 1992). Emphasized in this framework is the growing effects of modern American individualism and institutional life (e.g., Bellah et al, 1985) on philosophy of education. The analysis in this research on CSLEA concentrates even more on the changing contextual forces of the 1950s and 1960s, showing by this example how the field of adult education is influenced by the ethos and events of the times. My analysis is not an internal analysis of CSLEA that probes its effectiveness and why it did or did not succeed in its specific efforts. Although utilizing some internal sources, the probe here is primarily that of gaining perspectives of external influences on the life and death of CSLEA.

The methodology of the research has two parts. One is that of collecting and analyzing archival materials, particularly those screened at the 1993 Research-in-Progress Conference and drawing from five Collections at Syracuse University: Fund for Adult Education (FAE), Center for the Study of Liberal Adult Education, A.A. Liveright, Paul Sheats, and James Whipple. (Liveright and Whipple served in the leadership staff of CSLEA while Sheats was a key member of the Board of Directors.) The second part of the methodology is that of utilizing pertinent literature that examines the 1950s and 1960s. These sources provide valuable insights into understanding the cultural forces at work during this period.

### CSLEA 1951-1968

As with many other organizations in education, CSLEA was conceived through a funding proposal, one by the committee on Liberal Education of the Association of University Evening Colleges to the Fund for Adult Education of the Ford Foundation,

which had a programmatic interest in recovering and renewing the liberal arts. First housed at the University of Chicago--a bastion of liberal education since Hutchins' leadership--and first directed by a Milton scholar, CSLEA laid out its first philosophical definition:

Liberal education is designed to free the mind, to develop mental capacities, to excite the imaginative powers, and thus it is not an information program; and that liberal education is not to be confused with vocational training. People have to earn a living, but liberal education is not supposed to teach them how. Liberal education should, however, make the student better equipped to solve both theoretical and practical problems, and thus make him more capable of living a good and creative life (Whipple, 1967, p.8).

Definitions, however, do not end philosophical conflict, and the CSLEA staff debated its mission, struggling with the uneasy relationship of the evening college with the larger university, and pulled between traditional demands of the university and those urban adults seeking help with social, political, economic and personal problems. After four years of dealing with such major issues, CSLEA posited six goals: (1) To encourage the development of liberal education programs explicitly for adults; (2) To help clarify the meaning of liberal education for adults; (3) To study the role and function of adult education divisions within the American university system; (4) To encourage the development of professional commitment and professional leadership for liberal education for adults; (5) To study the concept of "community" with special reference to implications of urbanism for university adult education; (6) To clarify the meaning of "adult needs" (Whipple, 1967).

The Center staff and board believed that the liberal arts were the best educational ways of dealing rationally with the human condition, emphasizing problems and issues rather than subject matter. Finding a balance between the "good individual" and the "good community," adult education was "to effect a working relationship between intellectuals, power people and operators, [developing] more autonomous individuals for life in a society which compels conformity and allegiance to specialized interest groups and organizations rather than a sense of community responsibility" (Report on CSLEA, 1955).

It was realized that its mission had to be carried out in an ethos that was non-liberal if not anti-liberal. During the middle to late 1950s, its committed sponsor, The Fund for Adult Education, moved more toward applying liberal education to practical social and political problems with emphasis on leadership for public responsibility. CSLEA, also having learned to distrust the pure liberal arts, moved increasingly from the substance of liberal education to institutional settings and how liberal education for adults could be fulfilled. Targeting individual leaders in higher education as a way to modestly implement change, these years are described as "busy, productive, and satisfying." (Whipple, 1967). During this period, even until 1962, CSLEA was well accepted by the adult education field and well-financed by FAE, innovatively challenging conventions in university adult education. And within its basic mission, the Center became "involved in Negro continuing education, in programs of labor education and in studies relating to the social forces influencing continuing education. . . . and with experiments in content and method for women" (Liveright, 1968).



Although involved in social issues before the civil rights movements of the 1960s, CSLEA resisted changing its mission to adapt to new funding priorities, including those non-liberal ones from industry. It depended on FAE for financial support, and when this came to an end in 1962 although continuation of CSLEA was encouraged, funding became the paramount issue. With some flexibility from the Ford Foundation and some help from the Carnegie Corporation, the Center treaded water for a year until it affiliated with and moved to Boston University.

In its last years, CSLEA did what educational organizations often do in the face of financial uncertainty: The reduced staff broadened its activities rather than prioritize and limit its activities to focused goals, hoping all along that new sources of funding would be coming. Toward the end, Whipple (1967) concluded: "At a time when our society need organizations like the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults more than ever, the pressures of termination, budget, and non-liberal operational obligations have tended to upset the balance between the reflective and the operational activities of the staff and have conspired to force the Center to turn to the immediate rather than the important and to gravitate toward a posture that is not anti-liberal but is non-liberal in nature." Facing institutional realities in 1968, CSLEA decided to give up rather than prolong the life of an organization that could no longer do the functions for which it had been born (Liveright, 1968).

### Contextual Influences

CSLEA was born because the Fund for Adult Education, supported by the Ford Foundation, made liberal arts education a priority based upon certain assumptions. The Ford Foundation, going from a small Michigan entity to the nation's largest philanthropy, and its Fund for Adult Education, emphasized a liberal arts education that supported American values. After WWII there was a concern about preservation of democratic values with a vision of America's role in the world. No sooner were the threats of totalitarianism defeated than the Cold War with the Soviets heated, adding incentive for an education of adults emphasizing absolute values. There was an "unambiguous battle between good and evil. It was a time when people were proud to be Americans, trusted their leaders, and shared a consensus on basic beliefs and values." (Oakley, 1986, p. 434). "Domesticity, religiosity, respectability, security through compliance with the system, that was the essence of the fifties." (Miller and Norvak, 1977, p. 7)..

The U.S., surviving the war as an isolated victor, was in a major period of growing affluence in the 1950s, a decade of historic prosperity. Consumer projects, like refrigerators and automobiles, zoomed in sales, as the beginning of the post-industrial society turned to higher education. Fueling liberal education at all levels was a backlash against progressive education, which had stressed vocational education and non-absolute values. The critics of progressive education were diverse, but they were held together by backlash. Some critics saw a Communist plot in progressive schools, some academics struck down curricular inadequacies, but more than anything there was a public fear of relativism and a hunger for traditional values (Ravitch, 1983).

Sputnik in 1957 and the fear of Soviet technology escalated the American criticism of education, while making higher education an even higher priority. Although enhancing an entity like CSLEA, there was a downside of Sputnik for liberal education: the push for technical know-how in the race for superiority with the Soviets. The U.S. never was a nation that prized intellectual thought, as authors from de Tocqueville to Hofstadter remind us, but the felt-need of the society for scientific knowledge to solve immediate problems grew because of the Cold War as well as because of the growing post-industrial character of the society.

Another effect of the Sputnik crisis that affected CSLEA in the long run was the cry for federal aid to education. Americans have long had a faith in education solving social problems, but not federal funding, and by the early 1960s the doors to federal funding started opening up wide, first from a position of national defense, then from a drive for equity spurred by the civil rights movement. These effects upon CSLEA had two dimensions. Internally, it dealt with increasing pressure for liberal education to address immediate social needs and become "more operational" and "less reflective." Externally, there was increasing competition for foundation funding from an explosion of agencies now in the social arena, and this at a time when foundations started to retreat with the entrance of federal funding.

Because higher education increasingly was expected to respond to society's needs for the new knowledge industry, outside pressures intensified during the 1960s. Contracts with government and business, as well as faculty consultation, became commonplace. And student demand increased because a college education became expected by a growing number of post-WWII baby boomers. Although adult education now had an enhanced role in this new era of the university--a role long deemed necessary for liberal adult education by CSLEA--there was another side that would have a negative effect for its philosophy of education..

With the university gaining importance in an era when "Americans embraced the ideas that knowledge is power and that science . . . . would protect us from orbiting dangers," the professionalization of knowledge and the professionalization of adult education as a discipline were soon to follow. If "the principal asset of the professional is specialized knowledge," . . . . if "knowledge in depth takes the place of knowledge in breadth," . . . . and if "the multiplication of bureaucratic tools also tempts the professional to focus on means rather than ends (Yarmolinsky, 1978), then the belief of liberal adult education in interdisciplinary knowledge that affects values, faces stiff opposition. An influential piece in the push for professionalization came with new behaviorist definitions of knowledge and learning, reflecting a scientific paradigm that matched guidelines of federal agencies for technical accountability.

American education in the 20th century has tended to swing back and forth philosophically, sometimes abruptly, from one position to another in its search for the right ideas. Whereas liberal education rose in the 1950s in its backlash to progressive education, the 1960s saw the rise of a neoprogressivism emphasizing individual freedom. Although not targeted directly against liberal education, the movement did question the authority of faculty and academic curriculum. This neoprogressivism paralleled the students rights movements spurred by the Vietnam War, but it also reflected a deeper change in the American character.

In America's Quest for the Ideal Self, Clecak (1983) contends that the quest for personal fulfillment through a therapeutic search for self symbolizes the dominant thrust of American society during the 1960s and into the 1970s. Seeing this search tied to both individual salvation and social justice, he summarizes:

In a word, the postwar ideological shape of liberalism was challenged; its assumptions, values, and its characteristic sensibility . . . dissent not only affected people in every part of the spectrum of American political ideology, it permeated the regions of culture and personality . . . . (the) interplay of apparent opposites further pluralized and fragmented the cultural atmosphere in which the quest unfolded (pp. 18-21).

What sets the 1960s apart from the 1950s, then, is that the idea of individual potential is not only expanded significantly, but also diversified to include many in the society caught by historic injustices.

### Concluding Perspectives

Whereas the rise of liberal adult education in the 1950s reflected a need for social consensus and integration, the 1960s quest for personal and diversified fulfillment called forth a diminution of role standards and agreed-upon values. The sprouting of Humanistic adult education with its belief in personal freedom in goals as well as means reflected some aspects of this, particularly self-expression and self-directedness.

The reflection of individual salvation, however, is more apparent than the dimension of social justice in university adult education in the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than philosophy of adult education integrating group dynamics and community activism as (Sheats, 1970) advocated, the decade of the 1970s saw much more an integration of group dynamics rooted in expressive individualism (therapeutic self) and behavioristic programmed learning rooted in utilitarian individualism (economic self). The synthesis of these two types of modern individualism make up the bureaucratic individualism that characterizes contemporary American society according to Bellah et al. (1985).

As I have argued earlier (Podeschi, 1991), the work of Knowles symbolizes this synthesis in American adult education since 1970 and the publication of his The Modern Practices of Adult Education. In the past decade, the dimension of social justice has grown stronger in university adult education as concerns about race, class and gender inequities have increased. What has remained the same in the field, however, is the continuing loss of liberal adult education and its emphasis on interdisciplinary knowledge and its focus on aims and values.

CSLEA was an attempt to apply innovative liberal adult education to social problems and issues. As the U.S. field approaches a new century, perhaps it can recover some of the historic but problematic connections between the academic intellectual and community concerns. At least perhaps, we can become more aware of how the changing ethos and events of our societal and professional cultures affect our professed philosophy of education as well as what we actually do in adult education.

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Creating a Middle-Class Culture: Arthur Bestor and Adult  
Education in Transition

Amy D. Rose

**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the work of Arthur Bestor, President Chautauqua Institution in the first half of the twentieth century. It discusses Bestor's view of the changing nature of adult education and examines his speeches and writings in order to understand how this work fit into what historian Joan Shelley Rubin calls middlebrow culture.

In recent years social and cultural historians have been examining facets of what is generally considered adult education and yet by and large their interpretations have not found their way into adult education histories. This paper begins an analysis of the role envisioned for adult education within the broad middle-class culture of the first half of the twentieth century. Rather than view adult education as a simple reflection of this middle-class culture, this paper begins an analysis of how adult educators actually sought to help create such a culture and what this effort entailed. Since this is a very complex task, this paper will only discuss one aspect of this phenomenon - the views of Arthur Bestor as president of the Chautauqua Institution during the period between the wars.

Certainly the 1920s and 1930s have consistently been seen as critical in the history of adult education and this period has been more intensively studied than almost any other. Thus, it has been seen as the starting point for the development of a field of adult education as well as a time when some of the most innovative and exciting programs were developed. Yet much of the discourse has tended to isolate adult education from broader cultural currents. While this is understandable when the aim is the broad definition of a field of study, it nevertheless makes it difficult, if not impossible to place the phenomenon of adult education within a broader context. Whenever contextual factors are presented for this period they represent adult education as reflection of the period represented. Less clear is how adult education has been a part of the cultural tensions of the period.

Yet the movement for adult education in the period between the wars was part of a broader cultural transition which merged the remnants of the nineteenth century genteel traditions of character, discipline and duty with more modern concerns about standardization, bureaucratization, the uses of technology and the loss of individual autonomy. In order to understand adult education during this period, it is helpful to analyze some of this contradictory elements within the field's intellectual history. (Rubin, 1992). While the issues relating to the encounter with modern twentieth century life have long been seen as integral to the development of a field of adult education, the internal contradictions have not been fully examined.

Arthur Bestor offers an interesting case study as a transitional figure who merged a twentieth century internationalism with a nineteenth century morality; a concern with technology with the desire to recreate old-time camp meetings. As such, he is a good place to start this discussion. Although little known today, Bestor was an important figure in adult education in the period between the wars. As president of the Chautauqua Institution, that quintessential agency of adult education, Bestor traveled the country, lecturing about education, democracy, and the need for public intelligence. Bestor was president of Chautauqua from 1915 until his death in 1944 and in this role he struggled to redefine what the institution's mission was to be and how it was to remain financially viable. In this struggle he was emblematic of much of popular culture during this time. While on the one hand committed to a broad mandate of diffusion, Bestor both eschewed the growing reliance on expertise, while simultaneously attempting to use this reliance for what he saw as more worthwhile ends.

The Chautauqua Institution, located in upstate New York was started in 1874 as a summer school for Sunday School teachers. Its mission soon broadened into a diverse program of liberal arts and theological subjects which was to serve as the equivalent of a college education for those unable to attend. Chautauqua pioneered in the development of correspondence methods of study in the U.S. and for a time actually offered a bachelor's degree by this means. Across the country, adult met in study circles to read a prescribed reading list and become acquainted with the latest in science. Yet by the early twentieth century, other institutions had taken over and expanded many of these early functions and the Chautauqua Institution had to undergo a period of adjustment and profound change in order to survive.

Bestor became involved with Chautauqua in 1905 when he was recruited out of the University of Chicago to work on the summer program. When he assumed the presidency in 1915, the institution was already beginning its period of change and redefinition. Bestor proceeded to lay out a new program as the hallmark study circles failed and universities began to offer their own summer schools to compete with Chautauqua summer offerings. The result was an expansion of the Arts program particularly music, the lengthening of the season, and a reorientation to focus on Chautauqua's strengths, rather than compete with higher education for students. In the 1920s, Bestor began an extensive physical expansion program which almost ended in disaster during the 1930s when gate receipts fell as a result of the Depression.

While Bestor's primarily affiliation was with Chautauqua, he was an active participant in many adult education endeavors. For example, Bestor was active in the preparedness movement of the pre-World War I era. Acting first as Secretary of the Committee on Patriotism through Education of the National Security League and later Chair of this committee he was also appointed by President Wilson as director of the speakers' division of the

Committee on Public Information from 1917-1918. During the Depression he was a member of the Advisory Committee on Emergency education, reporting directly to the Commissioner of Education about the status of adult education programs. During World War II Bestor chaired the War Council of the American Platform Guild which worked with the White House on resolving the issue of free discussion of the problems of war and peace and the maintenance of homefront morale. Other than Chautauqua, Bestor worked longest with Town Hall, often acting as a moderator for its radio programs, "America's Town Meeting of the Air. Finally, he was a founding member of the American Association for Adult Education and served on its Executive Board continuously from 1926 until 1943.

Throughout his life, Bestor was concerned with a vision of American society and the role that education, particularly adult education, could play in achieving this vision. Bestor believed that reason could prevail over arms and that true peace and international understanding could only be achieved through education. He balanced this commitment to international understanding with a fervent belief in Anglo-American values and cultural institutions. The combination of his bearing, his educational values, his oratorical style, and the central thrust of his message earned him Morrison's (1974, p. 88) description as a "gentleman of the old school." No doubt this impression was compounded by Bestor's unflagging commitment to the lecture in a time of increasing technology.

Throughout his public life, Bestor emphasized the importance of public opinion and public intelligence. Although his arguments were not especially originally, Bestor was an apostle for the use of popular lectures in the shaping of this public opinion. Chautauqua served as a leader in this molding of public opinion by bringing together speakers and spurring discussion of important issues. For Bestor, such discussion allowed the free flow of opinion so vital to democratic processes. During World War I he wrote that the purpose of discussion was

... to arouse the American people to the meaning of the war and the importance of personal service, will make Chautauqua the dynamo of the country in this great patriotic propaganda. (1917)

In Bestor's view, intelligence or rather rational thought was attainable if people were made aware of the facts. Therefore, during the preparedness period, his entire program was dedicated to spreading knowledge about Germany. He assumed that if the true facts were known, people would rally to the war effort. (Bestor, 1917). During the World War I period the entire Chautauqua program was planned around a patriotic design. But since Bestor was nevertheless committed to discussion and debate, he also invited pacifists, such as Scott Nearing, to speak. (Cram, 1990).

Bestor carried this dedication to public opinion over to this

work with the Committee on Public Information. The Committee's task was to use propaganda to win the war. Although criticized for its excesses, the committee and its emphasis on public opinion was, according to Bestor the most important part of the war effort outside of direct service. (Bestor, 1918). Because of this, Bestor defended the one-sided reports that the Committee was putting out. He felt that

... the government has the undoubted power to force unity and co-operation behind the war program.... If any citizen cannot agree with the decision of the majority as made by his representatives, he should at least keep his mouth shut. (Quoted in Cram, 1990).

Bestor keenly felt that intellectuals had a key role to play in mobilizing support for the war. This could only be done through education. Thus educational institutions needed to keep the "foreign born with us by education rather than by suppression...." (Bestor, July, 1918)

Nevertheless, Bestor later displayed an understanding of the dangers of propaganda which could only be stopped with free discussion. Free speech and free discussion were the "life blood" of democracy. (Bestor, 1938, p. 29).

Based on a conviction that intellectuals had an important role to play in world peace, Bestor saw adult education as the mechanism for providing the unique opportunity for both improvement and innovation. He linked the dissemination of ideas to the possibility for a rebirth of civilized behavior. The postwar world presented new possibilities linked by three distinctive elements: new freedoms of opportunity, of work, of life; new prosperity and comfort; and the recognition that education must be lifelong. The roots of this new lifelong education were to be found in the increased leisure of the average working person. This lifelong learning would sidestep the standardization of children's education and would be led by private groups with a commitment to innovation. (Bestor, n.d.)

Chautauqua would be a leader in this postwar world because it had already pioneered in the use of leisure for study. In a radio panel discussion, Bestor insisted that institutions such as Chautauqua

... render a real service in quickening the social spirit, in helping create the public opinion which under effective leadership may bring wise collective action. These are the influences which must be taken into consideration in the field of education, making for intelligence, tolerance and democracy. (Bryson, n.d.)

Discussion was the key to true adult education. Chautauqua's strength was its use of controversial speakers and topics to stimulate discussion. The role of discussion lay in:



... fostering an interest in things of the mind, in quickening the social spirit, in helping create the public opinion which under effective leadership bring about wise collective action. (Bestor, 1938, p. 28).

Bestor was a transitional figure. All of his work was geared toward the revitalization of education and he was firmly committed to the new concept of adult education. But this ideal was predicated on the ideal that conflicts could be resolved if we could only see each other's point of view. Bestor saw that education provided the possibility for both self-development and understanding, but he believed that correct action would flow from the acquisition of knowledge. Thus while he was concerned with education as it related to world peace and domestic tranquillity he saw the problems of the world as due simply to a lack of cultural understanding. His pleas for greater understanding and mutuality of interest were tinged with the idea that there was a right way of thinking. Hence his belief in discussion was tied not to dialogue, but to a Manichean view of good and evil debating, with good the ultimate winner.

Bestor was also committed to the use of technology, particularly the radio to spread his educational goals. While the summer session at Chautauqua represented the old fashioned notion that education was best experienced in a new milieu, face-to-face, through immersion, his work with radio exposed him to the potential of reaching a mass audience. The central task was to develop the individual to use technology instead of being its servant.

Bestor's life and work personified the genteel ethos found during the period between the wars. He believed in the potential of each individual for self-development, but this was to be guided by experts. While eschewing the role of the expert, Bestor ironically saw intellectuals as experts, leading the way for those who were not as well informed. He combined a fear of conformity with an acceptance of it. His views embraced the middle-class, not necessarily as a reflection of class values, but in an attempt to direct this class to higher levels of consciousness. This was combined with an attitude of social control, especially toward the uneducated, but also held to the belief in the educability of all. Bestor's work was part of a middlebrow culture that prevailed during this period, but left little of long lasting appeal. In terms of adult education, Bestor's work has had little impact and is not well-known, primarily because the middle-class vision it espoused and the paradoxical positions he held did not survive.

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**Toward a Critical Multicultural Pedagogy for Adult Education**  
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**Abstract:** As a step toward developing a multicultural pedagogy for adult education a review of literature on multicultural education and related critical pedagogies was conducted. From the analysis of this literature a number of principles for teaching and learning were identified. These are shared here for further discussion.

**Elements of Theory and Significance to Adult Education**

A review of contemporary literature across a number of disciplines reveals a series of ongoing skirmishes in what has been called the cultural war, as groups traditionally marginalized both in the academic and the public sphere have attempted to claim their place in history and give voice to their experience. Their challenges to prevailing canons and practices in higher education have often been met with outcries from critics such as Dinesh D'Souza (1991), alleging that radical newcomers have taken over the academy and seek to limit academic freedom. On campuses and in the streets we see both a rebirth of overt racism and the less obvious manifestations of internalized racism when despairing youth participate in their own dehumanization. We are reminded of the continuing effects of racial discrimination by works such as Hacker's (1992) Two Nations or Bell's (1992) Faces at the Bottom of the Well.

It would seem that adult education has the potential to play a critical role in educating adults for participation in a multicultural democratic society and reconstructing existing social, political and power relations toward the espoused ideals of such a society. Yet, an examination of existing literature raises the question of both our interest in and readiness to play such a role. This presentation will share an emerging framework for a critical multicultural pedagogy. The framework is intended to assist adult educators in interrogating existing assumptions and practices within adult classrooms. Finally, the development of such a framework is seen as an important element in the reclaiming of adult education's social reform tradition, if adult educators are to be among the "cultural workers" (Giroux, 1992) involved in the struggle to create an authentic pluralistic democracy.

**Relationships Among Elements**

Without intending to discount other forms of oppression, this framework will emphasize the intersecting core variables of race, class and gender. Pedagogical models will be examined which emphasize each of these variables, and the elements of a multicultural pedagogy for adults will be suggested.

**Relationship to Existing Theory**

Discussions of multiculturalism in American adult education can be traced to earlier decades in the work of individuals such as Kallen, credited with coining the term cultural pluralism and Locke, a leader in the intercultural education movement of the 1940s (Banks, 1993). Contemporary treatments of multiculturalism in adult education seem to represent at least two approaches. Some works focus primarily on creating a space for missing voices and histories (Neufeldt & McGee). Other are primarily concerned with how to serve populations that have been marginalized and concomitantly less involved in traditional adult education programs (Ross-Gordon, Martin, & Briscoe, 1990). Some attempt to combine these aims (Cassara, 1990). Although a few authors have attempted to categorize multicultural education as it applies to adult education (Hemphill, 1992), there is not evidence of a significant effort toward developing a theoretical framework for analyzing adult education activities and enterprises relative to the goals of multiculturalism and democratic pluralism. The aim of this paper will be to move in that direction, with a particular effort to develop a framework that is consistent with approaches to multicultural education focused on empowerment, anti-racist pedagogy, or anti-bias education.

As we construct a framework for multicultural adult education it seems valuable to examine existing and proposed responses that other educators have formulated for addressing the same educational issues. Multicultural education is a term used to refer to a range of responses with a number of common goals and ideological similarities. Because this appears to be the dominant discourse in American public and higher education today I will begin with an abbreviated analysis of its theoretical basis, historical origins, and evolving forms. Because multicultural education takes many forms, I will also share a typology of typologies, within which I have attempted to categorize a number of the approaches already typologized by others.

## Multicultural Education

**Theoretical/Philosophical Basis.** The discussion of multicultural education is generally rooted in liberal theory, with conceptual ties to cultural pluralism (Pachecho, 1977) and democratic pluralism (Bullivant, 1981). Within this liberal tradition some conceptions of multicultural education have emphasized its function in stimulating educational equality for who might not otherwise experience it (Banks, 1993, p. 3), others have emphasized its value in preparing individuals and institutions to become more responsive to a diverse society (Bullivant, 1981).

**Historical Overview.** Banks (1993) traces the evolution of multicultural education. First of all, he cites precursors in "counter-hegemonic activities" which in some cases can be seen as representing shared histories with adult education: literacy efforts during slavery and immediately after emancipation; settlement education; the intergroup education movement of the 1940s and 1950s (for which Alain Locke served as a leader), and literary works such as Carter Woodson's *Mis-education of the Negro* (1933). The ethnic studies movement of the 60s and 70s, following on the heels of the civil rights movement, is credited as the earliest formal phase of the multicultural education. Banks views multiethnic education as the second phase of multicultural education, with its goals extending beyond the insertion of ethnic studies into curricula and aiming to bring about systemic changes to increase educational equity. The third phase he refers to as expansion, "when other groups who viewed themselves as victims of society and the schools, such as women and people with disabilities, demanded the incorporation of their histories, cultures and voices into the curriculum and structure of the schools, colleges and universities" (1993, p. 20). Finally, he sees the fourth and current phase as consisting of the development of theory, research and practice that interrelate variables connect to race, class, and gender.

**Approaches to Multicultural Education.** The reader should be aware that not all multicultural education efforts are consistent in goals and associated practices. There have been a number of efforts to typologize multicultural education. I will first share one of the more commonly cited typologies with descriptions of five approaches to multicultural education. This typology was first presented by Grant and Sleeter in 1989 and modified slightly by Sleeter (1991).

1. **teaching the culturally different**— efforts to consider learning styles, skill levels and language backgrounds of students in adapting instruction.
2. **human relations** — efforts focusing on sensitivity training as a means to intercultural understanding.
3. **single-group studies** — the history, cultural contributions, and current social agendas of specific groups are studied, with a particular effort to study from the perspective that group members would take.
4. **cultural democracy** — emphasize redesigning classrooms to be less oppressive. The ideals of equal opportunity and cultural pluralism are brought into the classroom.
5. **multicultural and social reconstructionist** — political participatory skills are introduced into the curriculum, with a focus on all forms of group oppression. While similar to their fourth type, this approach is more action oriented, with strategies including the analysis of student's own experienced social inequalities and exercises which facilitate the practice of democracy in and beyond the school.

In her later work, Sleeter (1991) clearly favors the latter three approaches, which she sees as enabling goals of empowerment.



While multicultural education has been criticized from the right as well as the left as if it were one monolithic entity, there are clearly philosophical difference reflected in these approaches. To facilitate further analysis of the approaches I offer the following re-categorization of approaches which have been typologized by others.

#### A. Locus of change

| <u>culturally "different" individuals<br/>teachers</u>   | <u>all individuals</u>                     | <u>individuals, organizations<br/>and society</u>   |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| teaching culturally different<br>(Grant & Sleeter, 1989) | human relations<br>(Grant & Sleeter, 1989) | social reconstructionist<br>(Grant & Sleeter, 1989) |
| deficit, assimilation<br>(Hemphill, 1992)                | multicultural<br>(Hemphill, 1992)          | empowerment, anti-bias<br>(Hemphill, 1992)          |

#### B. Action-orientation

| <u>Emphasis on attitude<br/>change (tolerance)</u> | <u>Emphasis on behavioral<br/>change of individuals</u> | <u>Emphasis on<br/>changes in ways of<br/>acting socially</u>          |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| cultural understanding<br>(McCarthy, 1993)         | cultural competence<br>(McCarthy, 1993)                 | cultural emancipation and<br>social reconstruction<br>(McCarthy, 1993) |

#### C. Single-Groups vs. Multiple groups

| <u>Specific groups</u>                          | <u>Learning about<br/>multiple groups</u>  | <u>Equivalent emphasis on<br/>eliminating racism, sexism<br/>classism</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ethnic studies<br>(Banks, 1993)                 | multi-ethnic education<br>(Banks, 1989)    | empowering school culture<br>(Banks, 1993)                                |
| single-group studies<br>(Grant & Sleeter, 1989) | human relations<br>(Grant & Sleeter, 1989) | social reconstructionist<br>(Grant & Sleeter, 1989)                       |

Based on current conceptions of adult education which emphasize the critical and transformative dimensions of adult learning, it would seem that those approaches to multicultural education which are likely to provide the best fit with adult education purposes would be those which emphasize an active orientation, suggesting unity of theory and action both at the personal and organizational level. It would also seem that our major interest would be in approaches which do not emphasize the responsibility to change only for those who are "different."

#### Critical Pedagogies

Although some sources on multicultural education offer some ideas on what might constitute empowerment multicultural education I initiated a broader search, both for theoretical purposes and for a clearer picture of what adult teaching-learning situations might look like under the conditions associated with such multicultural education approaches as "cultural emancipation and social reconstruction." Seeking also to develop a framework that was more deliberately informed by radical theory, it seemed to make sense to move beyond the approaches offered by the dominant

discourse on multicultural education, to consider a range of pedagogical theories similarly concerned with issues of race, class and gender. While adult educators steeped in the tradition of andragogy may react to the use of the term pedagogy, that term is used here in a way quite different from Knowles (1981). Lusted (1986) defines pedagogy as "the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies — the teacher, the learner, and the knowledge they together produce." For a definition of critical pedagogy, I refer to Patricia Lather, who defines critical pedagogy as "that which attends to practices of teaching/learning intended to interrupt particular historical, situated systems of oppression, such pedagogies go by many names; Freirean, feminist, anti-racist, radical, empowering, liberation theology) with overlaps and specificities within and between...." (Lather, 1992, pp. 121-122)

In an attempt to map out some of the "overlaps and specificities within and between" four critical pedagogical discourses which I found relevant to this effort, I constructed synopses of both key concepts and advised instructional processes through an inductive analysis of several key sources representing each approach. The four pedagogical discourses I have chosen to focus on and sources consulted are: Afrocentric/ anti-racist (Asante, 1991; Brandt, 1986; King, 1991; Colin & Preciphs, 1991; Giroux, 1992); Black feminist (Brewer, 1993; Collins, 1990; hooks, 1989); critical/liberatory (Giroux, 1984; Mc Laren, 1989; Shor & Freire, 1987); and feminist (Blundell, 1992; Hayes, 1989; Lather, 1992; Schniedewind, 1987; Shrewsbury, 1987). In selecting discourses on pedagogy my intent was to include discourses giving emphasis to race, class, and gender, either separately or together. Since these pedagogies go by many names, as Lather points out, I make no claim to a flawless categorization of the sources, although I attempted to group them according to primary emphasis on each of the core variables of race, class, and gender, with the Black feminist framework most explicitly reflecting the integration of all three variables. In selecting sources preference was given to those which clearly spelled our implications for interaction between students and instructors as well as offering some theoretical basis. I will briefly summarize my interpretation of both commonalities and distinctive elements of the four approaches.

Conceptual Similarities and Differences. All the pedagogical discourses seem to share several core concepts or goals. These include an emphasis on deconstruction of hegemonic knowledge and structures, goals for emancipation of learners, and denial of claims to political neutrality for the espoused or any form of education. Distinctive emphases include an emphasis on capitalist economic structures within critical/liberatory pedagogy and emphasis on effects of racism (including its internalized forms) and strategies for its elimination in Afrocentric and anti-racist education. Some theorists of critical pedagogy also seem to place a particular emphasis on culture, including forms of popular culture which act as a vehicle for informal education. From Afrocentric and anti-racist pedagogy emerge such terms as "mis-education", "dysconscious racism" and "dysfunctional perceptions" to describe the ways in which racism, embedded within knowledge construction and educational practices, distorts the perceptions of both dominant and marginalized groups. Feminist pedagogies vary in emphasis, consistent with the recent tendency to speak of "feminisms". Blundell (1992) contrasts an emphasis on patriarchy in radical feminism with a greater emphasis on capitalist oppression in Marxist/socialist feminist traditions. Black feminist theory is best characterized by its emphasis on the interactive effects of racism, sexism, and classism, with concepts such as "polyvocality" used to describe the ways in which each of holds identities which are multiply situated by race, class, gender, age, ethnic culture, etc. Likewise more recent discussions in general feminist literature devote some attention to racism as a concern and give recognition to the particularities of women's experiences as well as their commonalities.

Commonalities and Differences Regarding Educational Practices. As with their theoretical bases and aims, several commonalities are apparent among these four discourses. All insist on the active involvement of all students and aim to validate and build on the lived experience which students bring to the learning situation. All see the classroom as a place where students and teachers should develop a critical intellect which challenges oppression and ideological hegemony. Proponents of each suggest as well that the challenge to oppression should not end at the

classroom door, either for students or teachers, though there is variance on the degree of insistence that instructors engage in transformative efforts in the "real world"

With regard to distinctive areas of emphasis I will first note areas where at least three of discourses seemed to place similar emphasis. The sharing of power between students and teacher seemed most keenly emphasized in the critical/liberatory and feminist perspectives (both general and Black). The call for collaboration among students seems of greatest concern to the Afrocentric/anti-racist conceptions and those of both general and Black feminist discourses. Next, I will note practices which appear to be emphasized more by two of the discourses. This includes particular emphasis on the student role in knowledge creation/production (general feminist and liberatory/critical discourses) and an emphasis on holistic approaches or an ethic of caring which incorporates the affective dimensions of learning (general and Black feminist). Finally, the Afrocentric/anti-racist discourse seems unique in its concern with two concepts. One is the notion of centrality, that the student must find his or her culture to be central (not marginal) within the knowledge shared. Second is the emphasis on learning by teachers (or un-learning) through teacher preparation and staff development programs that educate them to recognize and challenge racism, including their own.

If we were to develop a composite of the principles for teaching and learning suggested by these critical pedagogies, the list would read as follows:

1. active involvement of learners
2. integration of learner experience
3. power shared with learners
4. emphasis on acting in accordance with one's espoused support for transformative learning
5. collaboration among students fostered
6. students assisted to understand the processes of knowledge production and to act as knowledge creators
7. developing a critical intellect which challenges all forms of oppression.
8. a holistic view of learning, including its affective components
9. placing the culture of the student in a central, rather than a marginal position
10. an emphasis on teacher re-education, whether through preparatory or staff development programs

Several of these principles are obviously included among principles for teaching and learning advocated in adult education literature. The first three are emphasized almost universally in discussions of adult learning, although their implementation may not be as universal. It could be argued that the next three are emphasized within adult education literature to a varying degree, with probably even less evidence that they are implemented in practice. I think, however, that we all too rarely even talk about the last four principles as important to our practice. Perhaps this presentation can be helpful in stimulating further discussion of the relevance of these principles to multiculturalism in adult education and of challenges and strategies for their implementation.

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## FROM WORKERS TO TRADE UNIONISTS: TRANSFORMATION AND INSTRUMENTALISM IN WORKERS AND ADULT EDUCATION AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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**Abstract** This paper traces the movement from workers' education for social transformation to a more accommodative form of education. It argues that the dispute between progressive elements and the business trade union faction centered on control over the Workers Education Bureau.

### The AFL and the Labor Colleges

Although American workers' education can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, the American Federation of Labor's interest and involvement in formal workers' education goes back only to the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> However, from the start, the AFL's attitude towards workers' education, especially an independent workers' education free from union control, was ambivalent.

The AFL's first significant dealings with workers' education occurred when Ruskin College was opened in Missouri in 1901. Under the sponsorship of the historian Charles Beard (a future president of the American Association of Adult Education) and Walter Vrooman, Ruskin College was a branch of Oxford University's famous workers' education college. Yet despite the fact that British unionists offered to support the college with an endowment, the AFL turned them down. Samuel Gompers, the AFL's long-time president, always afraid of more radical elements, felt that the broad educational objectives of Ruskin were at odds with the organizations' business trade union orientation. For Gompers, the business of unions had little to do with education.<sup>2</sup>

However, if the leadership of the AFL was ambivalent towards an education designed specifically for workers, many rank and file members, as well as unionists outside the AFL were not. After the First World War, a flowering of independent labor colleges and schools occurred that was to threaten the AFL's dominance over the labor movement. As early as 1915 Seattle and Wyoming unionists reported on a successful model of workers education. The Seattle plan "formulated upon the theory that co-operation with existing organizations and associations would result in much helpful information and assistance with a minimum of expense" created an entire network of groups involved in workers' education, from faculty members at the University of Washington to labor choruses and music study clubs. Most interesting, the Education Committee sought to collect a "...a book, poem an essay or any piece of literature written by a worker..." The Gompers controlled AFL response, ever skeptical of workers' education, was lukewarm. While praising the Seattle organizers, it offered little support.<sup>3</sup>

Other labor organizations, were less reticent. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) founded its Workers University in 1917, offering a full course of study. By 1921 over two thousand people had attended the Workers University. The Women's Trade Union League, dedicated to the task of educating working women as to their rights as citizens and furthering unionism was founded in 1906. Similarly, the Rand School

of Social Sciences, affiliated with the Socialist Party, was founded in 1906.<sup>4</sup> But it was the ILGWU, a non-AFL affiliated union, which carried the banner of workers' education over the next decade. The ILGWU publicized the idea of Workers' Universities so much that the AFL was forced to appoint a committee to investigate the idea of workers' education. This 1919 report noted that the ILGWU offered nineteen classes in English throughout New York City as well as courses "consisting of 10 to 20 lectures" on Social Interpretation of Literature, Evolution of the Labor Movement, and Social Problems, among others. In addition, the ILGWU offered educational theatricals "attended by an audience of from 500 to 1,000" and an Extension Educational Service was established by which "every local of the international can have educational activities introduced at their own meeting places." These activities usually consisted of "topics related to the worker and his conditions, like Trade Unionism, History of the Labor Movement, Industrial Democracy..." The same report documents activities in labor colleges in Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles.<sup>5</sup>

In Pennsylvania, where the Philadelphia Labor College enrolled 700 students by 1927, the Director of Workers' Education wrote: "The labor colleges have proven so successful that organizations from other cities are now sending in requests for the services of the [Pennsylvania] Department in order that they may established as labor colleges throughout the state." In Boston, the college's secretary wrote: "Behind it all was a response to a call for men and women who believed in and stood for the organization of the workers, who through its teachings should be more able to advance the interest of the cause they stood for, should be better fitted to hold their own in discussions and dealings with the representatives of the intellectual and moneyed classes whose interests do not always run parallel with those of the workers and whose sympathies are in opposition to unionism and all it stands for."<sup>6</sup>

Israel Mufson (a graduate of Brookwood Labor College), described a Saturday class:

Serenely and with all the amenities of twentieth century civilization, problems are discussed in as good natured min-meet-mind atmosphere as in the most learned of philosophic associations....It is strange to see jewelry workers, hosiery knitters, operating engineers, clothing workers, painters and what not grapple with such problems as race prejudice, the nationalization of European industries, court injunctions, coal, and on and on and on.<sup>7</sup>

Similar activities occurred in such cities as Baltimore, Minneapolis and Portland. At its peak in the 1920s, over three hundred labor colleges were established with an estimated enrollment of over 20,000.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the explosion of growth of labor colleges and the rather glowing 1919 report, the AFL stance continued to be ambivalent. After praising the ILGWU over "the feeling of the students that the classes belonged to them, that they were at home in them, and took collective pride in them," the AFL committee concluded that "But such classes should be considered a stop-gap. The sound solution is a progressive board of education, responsive to the public."<sup>9</sup> The AFL still considered education to be largely outside the framework of business trade unionism. An independent workers' education movement, with its notion of transformation and a broad definition of education was viewed as a threat to the AFL's business trade union policy.

The AFL had good reason to be concerned. A.J. Muste of Brookwood College stated that workers' education can provide three functions: 1) make real the theory that education is for all people; 2) end the notion that education is simply preparation for life; 3) end the idea that labor and culture don't mix.<sup>10</sup> Fannia Cohn, Education Director of the ILGWU, stated the objectives of the workers' education:

Many realize that the object of our educational system at present is to adjust the individual to the environment with a view to perpetuating our social conditions. But the object of workers' education is rather to adjust the environment to the needs of modern life.

And

We believe that our education program for our members should be based on their daily experiences around the industry in which they are engaged and the union of which they are a member.<sup>11</sup>

This note of social change was echoed by the workers. A comment by Stanley Dziengielewski, a member of the United Mine Workers of America is typical of many of the comments of workers involved in the labor colleges: "From workers' education I want to get an interpretation of the world, and my place in it. In short, I want to know how it got this way: Why are we miners subjected to ninety-seven days of compulsory unemployment every year? Why, when we workers are jobless, must we also be breadless, homeless, and hopeless? They tell us that two hundred thousand of us miners are not needed in the industry. Why is this, and what is to be done about it?"<sup>12</sup>

The success of the labor colleges led to a series of national conferences on workers' education. The conferences resulted in the creation of the most famous labor college of all, Brookwood Labor College in Kanto, New York and the founding of the Workers' Education Bureau (WEB). The goal of the WEB was to gather information on workers' education, to assist in the educational work of existing labor colleges, and to stimulate the creation of additional workers' education projects throughout the United States. A major effort of the WEB was directed towards curriculum development. The Bureau started a professional journal, *Workers' Education*, and published two sets of inexpensive and easy to read textbooks known as "Workers' Bookshelf" and the "Workers Education Series."<sup>13</sup>

#### The Workers Education Bureau and the Decline of the Labor Colleges

The AFL, while commending the growth of the labor colleges, continued to be skeptical of the labor colleges efforts. Partly because of Samuel Gompers long standing anti-intellectualism and partly because of the AFL's long standing position that education was somehow extraneous to the labor movement, the AFL continued to balk at involvement in the workers' education and the WEB. However, by 1922 the AFL allowed its Education Department to cooperate with the WEB. The AFL soon made its presence known. By demanding a change in the constitution which gave the AFL additional seats on the WEB's executive committee, the AFL soon pushed the WEB to expel some of the more radical labor colleges from the organization, including the Socialist Party's Rand School and the IWW's

Work Peoples' College. The AFL was slowly increasing its grip on the WEB. In a 1923 address to the Workers Education Bureau, Samuel Gompers argued that workers education should focus on such things as English literacy and that workers' education should not have anything to do with politics. Workers' education should focus on technical and vocational training and leave "higher" education to the nations colleges and universities.<sup>14</sup>

William Green, Gompers successor as the AFL's president, continued the attack on the WEB. Green a strong proponent of vocational training and militant anti-communist and anti-socialist, seized on two reports that condemned the WEB's Workers' Bookshelf Series, as being pro-Communist and anti-religious. These reports were gross exaggerations. Rose, in a detailed content analysis, shows that the books fall into the category of a rather mild socialism. Nevertheless, the result of this embroglio was the increasing control of the WEB by the AFL.<sup>15</sup>

The final battle occurred over the activities of Brookwood. Throughout the late 1920s, the AFL became increasingly concerned with the "radical" activities of Brookwood. Despite protest from the ILGWU, and some of its own locals, the AFL withdrew all support from Brookwood in 1928. A year later, James H. Maurer, President of the WEB resigned after a bitter dispute with the AFL's representatives. Maurer claimed that the AFL was not interested in workers' education and that it followed reactionary policies, exemplified by its withdrawal of support from Brookwood. In fact, Maurer continued, since the AFL's involvement in workers' education there had been a decline in the numbers of individuals participating in workers education. The AFL, under its new president, Spencer Miller, Jr., now had almost complete control of the WEB.

While individual labor colleges continued to exist and in many cases thrive, they had lost their central coordination agency, the Workers Education Bureau to an AFL more interested in vocational and technical training than in broad based education for social change.<sup>16</sup>

### Workers' Education in the 1930s

Workers' education underwent a dramatic change in the 1930s. First, the depression resulted in severe financial constraints for all unions. Second, the lack of support from existing organizations lead to a decline and finally a collapse of the independent labor colleges. Finally, the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the mid 1930s lead to the integration of the educational programs within the process of organizations.

Moreover, universities became increasingly involved in the workers' education. Fernbach, in a study commissioned by the National University Extension Association, documents the increasingly instrumental and utilitarian view of education taken by such institutions as the University of Wisconsin's School for Workers. Labor unions, too, became more functionalist in their approach. Linton, in a classic examination of the United Auto Workers union notes how the major concern of the UAW was to educate its stewards and to command the loyalty of its members.<sup>17</sup> The transition in formal workers' education activities was now mostly complete. Instead of richly varied independent network of educational institutions which had a vision of transformed society, much of formal workers' education had become a narrowly focused form of steward training and technical education.



## NOTES

1. See Fred M. Schied, *Learning in Social Context: Workers and Adult Education in Nineteenth Century Chicago* (DeKalb, IL: LEPS Press, Northern Illinois University, 1993) for an early history of workers' education. The standard overviews are Marius Hansome, *World Workers' Educational Movements* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931); Theodore Brameld, ed., *Workers' Education in the United States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).
2. See Forrest W. Beers, "A New Labor College," *American Federationist* 8 (January 1901), p. 14; George A. Miller, "Education and the Labor Movement" *American Federationist* 9 (October 1902), p. 691. On the early English movement see Albert Mansbridge, *An Adventure in Working-Class Education: Being the Story of Workers' Educational Association, 1903-1915* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1920). See also John H.M. Laslett, *Labor and the Left: A Study of Socialist and Radical Influences in the American Labor Movement, 1881-1924* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).
3. *Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor*, held at San Francisco, California, November 8 to 22nd, 1915, pp. 157-158
4. Cohn, Fannia M. "The Workers University of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union," *School and Society* 11 (March 20, 1920): 348-350.
5. *Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Convention of the American Federation of Labor*, 1919, pp. 135-145.
6. Leonard Craig, "Workers Education in Pennsylvania" *American Federationist* 35 (September 1928): 1122-1123; John Van Vaerenewyck, "The First Trade Union College," *American Federationist* 33 (April 1926): 598-601. On the background to labor colleges see Mickey Hellyer, "Labor Colleges: A Forgotten Venture in Adult Education," *Historical Foundations of Adult Education* 1 (2): 6-8 and Mickey Hellyer & Fred M. Schied, "Workers' Education and the Labor College Movement: Radical Traditions in American Adult Education," *Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Annual Adult Education Research Conference* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University, 1984): 82-87.
7. Israel Mufson, "A Saturday Discussion Group," *American Federationist* 35 (October 1928): 1243-1247.
8. James H. Maurer, "Report of the Executive Committee, Proceedings of the Third National Convention of Workers, Education in the United States, 1923," in *Workers' Education Yearbook, 1924* (New York Workers' Education Bureau, 1924); Richard E. Dwyer, *Labor Education in the United States* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977): p. 2.

9. *Proceedings of the 1919 Convention*, p. 143.

10. A.J. Muste, "What Does Workers' Education Mean for Education?" *American Teacher* 11 (November 1926): pp.3-4.

11. Fannia Cohn, "Educational and Social Activities," *American Federationist* 36 (December 1929): 1446, 1447; see also *ibid.*, "Workers' Education Aims for Power," *Labor Age* 16, (November 1927) 9-10. On the ILGWU educational activities also see Robert P. Wolensky & Kenneth C. Wolensky, "Min Matheson and the ILGWU In Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region," *Pennsylvania History* 60 (4).

12. "What Do I Want From Workers' Education: A Symposium of Workers' Students Opinion," *American Federationist* 35 (January 1928): p. 96.

13. Brookwood has been much written about. Probably the definitive work is Jonathon D. Bloom, *Brookwood Labor College and the Progressive Labor Network of the Interwar United States, 1921-1937*, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1993). On the objectives of the WEB, see "Workers' Education Bureau of America," *American Labor Yearbook* 6, 1925 (New York: Rand School of Social Science): pp. 206-208; Spencer Miller, Jr. "Workers' Education, Its Achievements and Its Future," *American Federationist* 29 (December 1922).

14. See Samuel Gompers, "Hostility and Density of the Intelligentsia, *American Federationist* 29 (January 1922): 53-57 for his anti-intellectualism; Samuel Gompers, "Address to Workers' Education Bureau Convention, New York City, April 14, 1923," *American Federationist* 30 (May 1923): pp 40. On the WEB's dispute with the AFL see Clyde W. Barrow. "Counter-Movement Within the Labor Movement: Workers' Education and the American Federation of Labor, 1900-1937," *The Social Science Journal* 27 (Winter 199): pp. 406-410.

15. Caroline B. Rose, *Workers' Education, the Labor Movement, and the Intellectuals in the United States, 1920-1940* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1943).

16. On the dispute see James Maurer, "President's Message to WEB Convention Upon His Retirement, *Labor Age* 18 (May 1929): 3-5; A.J. Muste, "Rubber Stamp Education," *Labor Age* 18 (May 1929): 5-6. For Green's views on workers' education, see his articles on "Workers Education," *American Federationist* 34 (April 1927): 401-402 and "Workers Education," *American Federationist* 35 (October 1928): 1170-1171.

17. Alfred P. Fernbach, *University Extension and Workers' Education* (Indiana: National University Extension Association, 1945); Thomas Linton, *An Historical Examination of the Purposes and Practices of the Education Department of the United Automobile Workers, 1936-1954* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Graduate School, 1965).

## THE BODY IN TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

### CHRISTINE JOANNA SCHLATTNER

#### **Abstract**

In *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, Jack Mezirow advances a theory of transformative learning. He focuses on rational, critical reflection as the primary means for this change. This research explores the role the body may play in transformative learning.

#### **Introduction**

I lay nervously waiting for him to attack. His hand slapped the mat beside my head and my eyes snapped open and then shut again as though I could close off the threat I was facing. Instantly adrenaline flooded my system and I felt my heart pound against the floor where I lay face down. Fight or flight. He was talking to me now. Roll over. I felt his rough hands pin my wrists to the ground. I was waiting, I knew I had to fight. He let go of my hand to undo a zipper and I exploded into action. I jabbed his eyes and rolled him off me enough to thrust my knee between his legs. As he howled I pushed him away and got enough distance to kick him in the face—once, twice, or more. My kicks got weaker as fear sapped the strength out of my body. Time slowed to an impossible crawl as I deliberated with myself. Maybe I should just give up, I reasoned, I have no more strength to give. But even as I thought this I realized this meant sacrificing myself. I was filled with shame at the realization that all too often I was willing to do this. I decided I could not continue to sabotage myself this way. My vision focused, I saw my attacker and my body was filled with power. I finished him off with a solid kick to the head and he was down.

My coach blew her whistle to signal the end of the simulated fight. I shakily got up, went to my attacker's head and shouted "Look, Assess, No!". I ran to my classmates and together we yelled "911".

A year ago I participated in a course in which I began a journey of transformative learning. This occurred in a self-defense course called Model Mugging where participants fight against a fully-padded "Mugger" to achieve a knock-out victory. When confronted with a physical threat, my response, learned from childhood, was to become passive and go limp. The unspoken belief I had about myself was that I was weak, unable to defend myself: a victim. In this course I was given the chance to revisit those assumptions. Only by critically reflecting and recognizing my response as inappropriate, rationally, emotionally and somatically, could I reinterpret the situation and learn to respond more appropriately. One year later my life continues to be affected by this experience as I come to grips with and transform my victimization patterns, denial of anger and non-acceptance of others, all of which has made me more effective as a participant in social change.

#### **Transformative Learning**

In *The Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, Jack Mezirow proposes a theoretical model for how one's frame of reference for understanding, can shift to accommodate new experiences. Mezirow uses an interdisciplinary approach to show how a significant event in a individual's life may prompt a change in their way of perceiving the world and their place in it. Transformative learning begins with a

critical examination of personal beliefs, social norms and political realities, to reveal the underlying assumptions embedded in them. I call my own experience in Model Mugging transformative because it became obvious to me that my needs and interests were not served by my assumptions and could no longer support them. I learned a new understanding of myself and my relation to the world. I then took action upon the new set of assumptions: this action is transformative.

While Mezirow addresses the role of rational and psychological human aspects in a change of meaning perspective, the body as an active element in learning is overlooked. The body and its experiences are contributors, equal with other human aspects, to the formation of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Mezirow defines a meaning perspective as the sum of our general expectations and habitual orientations through which we determine our specific expectations for a given situation. A meaning scheme involves the knowledge, beliefs, value judgments or feelings involved in making an interpretation about the world and guiding our actions. Meaning perspectives and meaning schemes develop through social discourse and are transmitted to individuals through enculturation. Since each learner is constituted with a body which itself participates in all learning experiences and reacts in learned ways to situations, it follows that the body too is involved in the construction of meaning perspectives and meaning schemes.

In a society where over half the women are sexually assaulted at some time in their lives, physical violence, or the fear of it, is a daily reality for most women. In addition, a large part of social discourse revolves around the body, particularly women's bodies. All women are subjected to degrading images of the female body every day through the mass media. This discourse does not fall mute on our bodies. These realities about women's bodies are part of the social discourse of patriarchy and a formidable influence on women's enculturation and formation of meaning schemes and perspectives. Discourse about the body itself affects how we know who we are and how we fit into the world. We learn how to hold and move ourselves through social discourse including media images and the shaping influence of loving arms holding us or angry fists bruising us.

An important aspect of transformative learning is "emancipatory learning" achieved by a critical assessment of current practice (Mezirow, 1991). Emancipation is gained by the recognition or self-awareness of how one's life, roles and expectations contribute to determining one's circumstances. Emancipatory learning is transformative when we reconstitute the meaning we make of these to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience, and act upon these new understandings. Freire's (1970) work in adult education actively encourages emancipatory learning through awareness and critical assessment of assumptions uncritically acquired during childhood.

Mezirow and Freire focus on rational discourse as the means to the critical thinking necessary to emancipatory learning. But according to Brookfield (1987), rationality is but one aspect of critical thinking. Brookfield stresses the importance of emotions and intuition to critical thought and the occasional necessity for the individual to deliberately break with rational thought in order to promote these aspects.



However, neither Freire, Mezirow nor Brookfield also has anything to say about the role of the body in emancipatory learning. For these learning theorists information is made available to the individual who makes meaning of it thereby creating knowledge. Knowledge does not exist independent of the individual. If knowledge is created through the transformation of experience, (Kolb, 1984) and the body is an integral, inseparable part of the human experience, then the body too is involved in making meaning out of experience to create knowledge. To extend Mezirow's theory, I would argue that the whole human, including the body, learns to respond to situations uncritically from childhood. The body participates in "critically" assessing a situation and learning to respond differently because it participates in making new meaning of a situation.

Literature concerned with the role of the body in transformative learning and social change is beginning to emerge. Levin (1989) borrows from Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to suggest that our primordial contact with Being exists at a bodily level. He assumes that the nihilism of the West in modern times involves a denial of the body, and suggests a return to the body as a means for recovering a sense of wholeness and value. Herbert (1990), who studies the pioneering physiological works of Alexander, Feldenkrais and Erickson, places movement in the context of transformative learning. She believes that body practices should be an important part of emancipatory social practice which include the rational, emotional and intuitive aspects.

### *Body/Mind Dualism*

Recent literature in education and feminism have critiqued the Cartesian dualism of the mind and body which has dominated Western intellectual discourse since the Enlightenment. Palmer, (1987) and Berman, (1989) note the tendency within academia to separate intellectual comprehension from embodied understanding. The Cartesian world view requires a transcendent reason, able to separate itself from historical time and place. In the modernist era there is no room for the body's involvement in knowing, since the body, by situating any perspective, prevents the possibility of an all-encompassing perspective (Bordo, 1991).

A post-structuralist epistemology is emerging where the separation of the knower and the known is beginning to collapse. In this more holistic epistemology, all aspects of the knower are being recognized as contributing to her knowledge. Transformative learning theorists must rejoin the knower with her soma and research its contribution. However, by admitting the body into the realm of knowledge and recognizing the whole of the knowing subject, we cannot simply abandon our conceptual separation of various human aspects. In order to study the process of transformative learning we include the body in the analysis without simply melding it into the concept of human. Feldenkrais, one of the foremost pioneers of movement therapy, identified four components of the waking state: sensation, feeling, thinking and movement (Feldenkrais, 1972). However, he stressed the separation of these can only ever be conceptual.

The exclusion of any one of the four components is justified only in speech; in reality, not a moment passes in the waking state in which all man's (sic) capacities are not employed together. p.32

### *The Body's Participation in Creating Knowledge*

One body of learning theory which values the interconnectedness of the human aspects is that concerned with relational learning. Brooks (1986), observes a sequence of learning which she calls relational: a more holistic approach to education which is concerned with the connectedness of all human aspects in the learning process. Other theorists have proposed models related to classification of learning styles which include the body in a theory of learning, by dividing the individual into three aspects: mental, emotional and physical. (Seagal and Horne, 1986; Kolb, 1983; Rudolf, 1983) Since they are not concerned with transformative learning, their working definition of learning seems to be limited to the performance of tasks, or learning within existing meaning schemes. While these theorists consider the body as germane to the learning process, their analysis centres mainly on individual preference in learning style. They consider the body as tool for learning, capable of learning functions, but not itself part of the creation of knowledge.

However, the body does not simply carry out the will of its master, the mind, to learn. The body itself is involved in learning and knowing. This sounds strange to the Western ear, I believe, because we consider the body as a vehicle in which we live; a vessel for our minds and our emotions. Halling and Goldfarb (1991) are concerned about how the body is an instrument for knowing. They draw heavily on the work of Merleau-Ponty who suggests that the "body-subject" is the ultimate subject of perception, and that the body constitutes both our openness and closing off to the world. The body is the vehicle for human understanding of the world as well as other people.

Likewise, Berman, (1989) conceives of the human drama as "first and foremost a somatic one." (p. 108) Drawing heavily on Merleau-Ponty, Lacan and Winnicott, he attempts to show how children move from a sense of identity rooted in their bodies, and sustained by implicit connection with others and the world, to a sense of self based on how they look to others; creating another dualism of spectator and spectacle. Romanyshyn (1989) argues this linear perspective originated in the 15th Century, along with the rise of modern science and technology: "...in our role of spectator we have created a world in which it becomes increasingly possible to believe that we really no longer have to be with our bodies" (Romanyshyn, 1989, p.102).

Halling and Goldfarb use Merleau-Ponty's perception as a starting point against the Western tradition disregarding the body, but challenge his inherent lingering dualism. "Does it make sense to oppose the body to the self, bodily wisdom to intellectual understanding, physical expression to speech?" (Halling & Goldfarb, 1991, p. 314)

### *Feminism and The Body*

A growing body of feminist literature (Miller, 1976; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Pateman, 1988; Fraser, N. &

Nicholson, L., 1990; Tamm, 1991; Currie & Raoul, 1992) informs a theory of knowledge based on the integrated human. Because positivist research claimed universality yet failed to speak to and about women, feminists began their own research. Feminist theory, arising out of an inequality between the sexes naturally included the body in its search for knowledge. (Gilligan, 1982; Pateman, 1988)

Women's place in this culture are communicated in a great variety of ways, all of which shape gender differences, which impact on women intellectually, emotionally and somatically. In patriarchy, the social meaning given to male sexuality is superiority and authority over women, along with a hidden sexual contract which permits men open access to women's bodies. (Pateman, 1988; Tamm, 1991) Patriarchy defines the female form as inferior and "cursed" (Currie & Raoul, 1992). While some feminists such as Gilligan (1982) argue for a new cultural and moral order based on feminine values, this idea confuses sex with a socially-constructed gender. Women are socially-constructed by patriarchy and women learn who we are and what we are capable of in the context of a sexist culture.

The post-structuralist critique focuses on the modernist conception of a transcendent reason able to separate itself from the body and from historical time and place, (Fraser and Nicholson, 1991). Post-structuralist and post modernist movements in feminism (see Fraser and Nicholson, 1991 and Currie & Raoul, 1992), which have embraced the body as a locus of knowledge, recognize femininity itself as a category socially constructed by patriarchy. They conceive of knowledge as a subjective construction of meaning, mediated through social discourse. If the body is involved in the construction of meaning, the body itself is involved in transformative learning.

### *The Research Interviews*

This research-in-progress delves into the implications of including the body in a theory of transformative learning. Since most, if not all, perspective transformation involves all aspects of a human being, the changes which make up the transformation occur in all aspects: cognitive, affective, somatic and behavioural. How did these changes occur, what was the relationship between them, and how did the somatic aspect of learning contribute to the transformative process?

In the early stages of interviews it is still too early to look for patterns of change and inter-relationship between the aspects. However, at this preliminary stage interviews have indicated that the content of the self-defense class initially brought back memories of victimization along with all the accompanying emotions. Interview subjects described "checking out", a way of disassociating mind from her body in an attempt to not deal with the disorienting experience. Learning to convert dis-empowering emotions into empowering ones and then channeling those somatically seems to create a new association of general powerfulness. This personal power creates a greater awareness and effectiveness which then extends into community life and society as a whole.

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## **PARENTS, LEARNING AND PROJECT HEAD START: A SOCIO-POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This ethnographic study of parent involvement and education in Head Start addressed adult learning within the context of an interactive social system. This holistic approach based on both staff and parent perspectives revealed that teaching and learning were affected by issues of Capacity, uses of Power and the development of Connections among staff and parents.

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Extensive research has been undertaken on Head Start's impact on children since its inception in 1965. Little research has been completed however, which fully examines the mandated parent involvement component of the program that emphasizes the development of parenting and leadership skills, acquisition of job opportunities, and parent participation in program management. Anecdotal evidence is available about the ways in which parents contribute to and gain from the program, however the need for ethnographic research which reveals the processes by which these adults participate and learn in this program, while being frequently cited (Hubbell, 1983; Washington and Oyemade, 1987; Zigler and Munchow, 1992), has not been undertaken until now.

Similarly, researchers in adult education have also noted the need for continued research on learner participation, control, and decision making in programming and instruction (Rosenblum, 1985). The lack of research in this area is especially keen as it applies to disadvantaged adults. Furthermore, studies are lacking that not only emphasize the contextual nature of the educational process, but the intersubjective meaning systems of both learners and those who teach and direct them (Bagnall, 1989; Rose, 1994).

### **METHODOLOGY**

As a means of investigating Head Start as a social context for adult education, the ethnographic method was selected for its usefulness in developing theory and providing analysis of educational issues and properties not previously addressed in the field (Merriam and Simpson, 1989; Gowen, 1992). For comparative purposes the researcher took on the role of participant/observer at two Head Start centers. The primary site was a large center in an impoverished, largely black, urban community. The secondary site was rural, small and its participants were majority white. Women made up the majority of the program parents and staff at both locations. Data gathering took place during an entire program year, from August, 1991 to June, 1992 and involved participant observation, examination of archival materials, review of programming and curriculum materials, and structured and unstructured interviews with over 100 individuals. Data was analyzed using the techniques of domain and content analysis (Spradley, 1980), and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

### FINDINGS

Findings of the research were distributed into five areas.

**The Setting:** The program setting was typified by a lack of resources, inadequate facilities, and low skill levels of staff. No planning and few resources were put into programs for parents.

"I've tried to make changes, to voice complaints and be an advocate for the kids, in everything from the meals to the filthy bathrooms. I was told though, that I had better stop complaining, and that if I didn't, I might be let go, regardless of how good I was with the kids." (Teacher)

**Political infighting and no clear mission** was also a problem.

"I don't think we have one (a mission). Not a clear one anyway. What we expect for parents, and from parents is muddled. There's a lack of clarity on the part of staff. The family service workers think it's fundraisers for toys and the other staff disagree. But getting them to talk about it is another thing entirely." (Head Start Director)

As with resource levels, staff also had **low expectations about the value of parents**. Some staff felt there no meaningful activities for them, others didn't want them involved.

"Isn't the whole point of this program to get parents involved and care about what happens to their kids? Well, they are, and their opinion is being ignored. Administration doesn't really support parents, but sees them as a pain." (Family Service Worker)

**The Parents:** Parents in the program were low-income but not homogeneous. Some had always been in poverty; others were just recently experiencing economic and social problems. Their participation was affected by **resources of transportation, child care, illness, jobs, living situations, and by personal crises**.

"The only thing is, when they say activities at school, I can't just jump up and go 'cause I got the other two little ones at home." (Parent)

Participation was also affected by parents' **understandings about the value of being involved**. Higher SES parents typically reported having had a homelife that supported learning. They also had higher **expectations** about ways they would get involved. All parents expected to be treated in a competent, welcoming manner however, and were upset when this clearly wasn't always the case.

"I am thoroughly disgusted by this whole thing. I never get the meeting notices on time. It was difficult getting here tonight and when I do rush here, look what happens. It was a mess." (Parent)

While some wanted **"to make a difference"** in their child's life, no one expected that the program might specifically help them, outside of giving them some social time with parents. In fact, requested information and guidance was typically not provided.

"Um, I wanted to learn about what other parents thought about having their kids be here... And, just something for us. You know, sometimes you don't have other parents, other people to talk to... (Parent)

**The Parameters of Involvement:** It was found that parent participation was mediated in three distinct ways. The staffs' use of **power and authority** prevented some from being active.

"They want to pick who they want to pick. Because they like them. They don't like you, they don't want you there. That's the bottom line." (Parent)

It was also expected that parents adhere to rigid concepts of **"appropriate involvement"** when participating in the program.

"To (administration), appropriate means not raising hell. We don't tell parents that though, we tell them if they have an issue that they need to raise, to go for it, to carry out whatever it takes to address it." (Family Service Worker)

Parents' **limited choice** in programming was also a reality. Even requested information was ignored, denied, or mishandled.

"You're okay when they want something, and when you say yes to that. Yes them to death, and agree with everything and you're okay. Give them an argument and you're not." (Parent)

When parents did challenge these parameters and sought more participation, they were met with roadblocks and resistance.

"They were supposed to have a policy council meeting every month, but when they saw that they had an active bunch this year, they only had three meetings. Valerie and Desmond run everything, they control it all." (Family Service Worker)

**Teaching/Learning Processes:** Despite this environment, parents did engage in learning in five ways. Parents interacted with staff and other parents through **teamwork, dialog and referral**, and by **attending workshops and meetings**.

"I guess you could say I teach them about how to run things. But mostly they have to get out there and just do it, or they won't learn. I help them when they need it, I guide them. It's a lot of hands on work to get them up to where they can do things well." (Family Service Worker)

**Modeling** also played a critical role in helping parents learn.

"When parents see what we do with their kids, it reinforces what they do. How we talk to the kids, what kinds of things we play with them. We play sort of a role model for them when it comes to interacting with the child." (Teacher)

The fifth category was **resistance**, wherein parents sought to raise issues and concerns, and challenge the program status quo.

"I challenged them. They like me as a person, but as a voice, I don't think they care too much for me. They view me as someone who's constantly out to make their job hard, but I really don't care." (Parent)

**Learning Outcomes:** Eight types of learning outcomes were discerned among parents. These were information about **jobs, resources, and Head Start**. **Leadership** skills were also acquired.

"I really got educated when I got involved in Head Start. Well, I was a young mother, only sitting at home and into babies and soap operas. Then I signed up my son and got involved. Head Start got me out and into organizing things and doing activities." (Staff and Former Parent)

Many parents also developed **parenting** and **teaching** skills.

"I have learned to put myself in the role of a child and try to understand their needs. I have also learned patience. It's funny, but I never thought about that before, I just got mad, but now I see they have different skills at different times, and they need to mess up to learn." (Parent)

A **transformation** in parents' perspectives also occurred.

"They are so proud of the program, and of themselves, cause they get to see their skills, things that they might have never seen in themselves before." (Family Service Worker)

An eighth outcome of "**learning when to quit**" was also evident as parents tried to make change or remedy problems without result.

"I went for help. I went to administration and I got no where. I would have liked to have really done something about this, but I guess I'm not strong enough. But I just couldn't, they didn't want you around, you could tell. I wish that we could have ended on better terms. But sometimes, I guess you just have to let things lie." (Parent)

#### DISCUSSION

Throughout the wealth of data three key concepts emerged, which when linked, provided the explanation of how this interactive social system influenced both learning and dropout among this population. These concepts are **Capacity**, **Power** and **Connection**.

**Capacity:** Parents entered into the Head Start system with a set of physical/material, intellectual, cultural, and interpersonal resources, as well as expectations about their role as parent in the program. When combined, these translated into their capacity for participation and learning in the program. Unless they had high expectations and an understanding of the value of involvement they were not likely to try to overcome any resource constraints keeping them from participating. The staff in the program also had resources and expectations that affected their capacity to act as teachers or guides. Staff who had high expectations about themselves and about the value of the parents were most likely to involve and support parents, however they did so differentially based on their perception of each parent and their resources.

**Power:** Staffs' actions of differentially encouraging or dissuading parents from involvement were manifestations of their use of power and authority. Staff had a powerful ability to affect parents' participation, hence parents' learning capacity cannot be considered as a static property, but changeable based on issues of social setting and support. The basis of staffs' power stemmed from the cultural meanings that both parents and staff held about the authority and expertise of schools and educators. Unfortunately, the authority which the staff obtained with their acquired roles was not legitimated by knowledge, expertise and/or experience. In absence of these attributes, and in order to support their role of authority, the staff distanced themselves from the parents through language, and categorized parents as being pushy, unworthy, disinterested or unreliable. This served



to not only reinforce their own superior role, but the notion that parents as a group should be controlled.

Those parents who were considered to be worthy and "like me" were encouraged by the staff to participate, but only within certain parameters. The conduct demanded by these boundaries was reminiscent of stereotypical expectations about female behavior. Parents were to be supportive, never critical; were to acquiesce to the staffs' authority; and were to be silent and unchallenging of their lack of opportunity to participate in making authentic choices about the program. As a result, the parameters of parent involvement enforced roles that involved little exercise of power.

**Connection:** Several types of connections were evident as a result of participation in the program. These included personal connections between staff and parents; connections of relevance through the application of information and skills; the connection of life experience to one's future potential, and the connection of the self to the greater good. In order for learning to take place, personal connection on some level was required. Parents from homes that stressed learning came into the program with ideas about the relevance of their involvement. Unless these parents made connections with the staff which were supportive to their active role, frustration, anger, and dropout resulted. Connection was equally important however, to parents who did not have an understanding of why they should be involved in their child's learning; they only acquired this understanding once connections with staff were made. Therefore, if none were established they did not participate, and hence, did not engage in learning.

The importance of connection becomes apparent when one considers the way in which capacity and power affected it. With no clear mission, and with low resources and expectations, little emphasis was placed on parent involvement. As a result many made no attempt at participating. This situation was compounded by staff who actively discouraged parents from becoming involved. Parents who did participate developed relationships with the staff based on a consensual understanding of power: staff as guide and authority, parent as needy client and/or helper. In such circumstances parents were encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility with the staff in order to undertake experiences beneficial to the program, themselves, and their children. These experiences with staff helped parents learn skills and form connections of relevance, as well as explore their own potential.

Once connections of relationships and relevance were made, parents' capacity for learning in the program increased. Now knowing more about the program, they sometimes sought to use their experience or knowledge by contributing more time, energy and suggestions. They expressed higher expectations about their role, and often greater levels of satisfaction. As a result however, in many cases they also wanted to make changes, and they challenged the power dynamics of the program. This resulted in the staff's attempts to restrict parents' actions, for in seeking more power parents were stepping outside of the parameters of appropriate involvement. In these situations parents sought out support. If

they did not receive it they typically dropped out. If relationships were formed however, they were grounded not only in mutual responsibility, but in mutual respect and a desire to change the system. In resisting together, even when they were not entirely successful parents were able to learn new, relevant leadership strategies, ways of dealing with systems, new views about their own inner strengths, limitations, and perspectives, and ultimately, how their struggle connected with the greater good.

#### IMPLICATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

This research has many implications for Head Start, but it also has ramifications for all of adult education. Among other issues it brings to light the critical role that personal connection plays in the learning process, as well as the need to address issues of learners' and teachers' expectations about the other, and the mechanisms of power and control in programs. It also forces us to consider the ethics of programming that promises something different than it delivers, whether that be from a lack of resources or from perspectives that may be different from our own. Finally, this study legitimates the call to examine, as social systems, all adult education settings in which we as practitioners and scholars interact. Only by making our familiar environments "strange" (Spradley, 1980), and seeing anew do we discover the hidden mechanisms that shape our assumptions, our actions, and our power as educators.

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## Changing Dogmas in Mid-Stream: Responding to the Challenges to Rational Planning

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### Abstract

Rational planning has been challenged from a growing number of fronts in the last two decades. This paper identifies four of these challenges, suggests some implications for planning theory, and proposes an alternative view of planning that responds to the challenges.

In recent years, traditional—often labelled “*rational*”—models of educational program planning have been criticized for not adequately accounting for context, being too linear and inflexible, ignoring power and politics, and otherwise not being useful tools for those who plan adult education programs in ever-changing, highly-political and economically-challenging settings. The criticisms have been grounded in arguments about the limits of rationality, the folly of accepting positivist assumptions, the need for more democratic and interactive decision-making processes, and the problem of dominant groups interpreting the needs of others and thereby controlling access to scarce educational resources. Although few well-articulated alternatives have been proposed, there have been consistent calls to develop models from different paradigms (for example, subjective, constructivist or feminist) or to base them on different metaphors (for example, planning as negotiation or planning as design).

The thesis of this paper—as suggested by the title—is that the challenges to rational planning are substantial and could produce a paralysis of planning theory unless they are addressed. Some of these challenges raise questions about the legitimacy of planning itself, yet it is hard to imagine what a world “liberated” from planning and planners would be like. This paper takes the view that the challenges to rational planning raise important issues that cannot be ignored by those who profess an interest in planning theory and practice. Avoiding paralysis of planning theory requires that the essence of these challenges be understood and that the elements of the challenges that seem justified be addressed in adult education planning theory.

### Intentions and Planning

This analysis is based on several notions about planning that should be made explicit. The first and most important of these is that planning is any process that links intentions with actions. Planning involves choosing to act because of a belief that an action, or set of actions, is consistent with one or more intentions. It is “rational” planning if there is a higher probability that the chosen actions will satisfy intentions than other possible actions that were considered. Once formed, intentions resist reconsideration; they have various degrees of stability or inertia (Bratman, 1987). These notions provide the first targets for criticism because they reveal the central concepts and foundational propositions for a planning paradigm. They are tempting targets because the limits of rationality have been questioned, concerns about the inertia of intentions have been voiced, the implied temporal order of the



process has been challenged, and inequities reproduced when dominant groups control planning have been demonstrated.

It is hard to conceive of a planning model—rational or otherwise—that does not employ intention in some form (goal, aim, purpose, objective, interest) as a central construct. Some planning models dictate how intentions should be expressed, some limit consideration of intentions to those that serve the interests of one group, and some try to maintain a neutral stance regarding the merits of competing intentions, but all are based in the notion that intentions are important in planning. Likewise, it is difficult to think of a planning model that does not discuss the selection or development of actions that are thought to be consistent with intentions. Some models dictate the order in which actions and intentions are addressed, some limit the range of actions to those that are consistent with a particular philosophical position, and some suggest that “science” is the only proper basis for selecting actions. But whatever the relationship between intentions and actions, these two concepts remain central to understanding what planning is.

### **Rational Planning vs. Other Planning**

It is no easy matter to categorize the approaches to educational planning that have evolved in the past 40 years, although many have common characteristics that could be used to classify them. With a few exceptions, planning models address in more or less detail the following matters: aims or purposes to be achieved by the program, needs or interests of the learners, specific outcomes expected from the program, instructional strategies and resources that will be employed, and evaluation methods that will be used to determine the worth or value of the program (Sork and Buskey, 1986). These characteristics, in themselves, do not seem to provide an adequate basis for differentiating rational from other planning models.

Adams (1991) has proposed a framework for placing planning models on a continuum from “rational” to “interactive.” Adams admits that “There are elements of rationality in virtually all planning models just as there are elements of interaction” (p. 13). Nevertheless, he does provide a basis for organizing models along a continuum. He characterizes rational models as having the following characteristics: assume a linear process of decision making; limit variables under consideration to those that can be quantified; define implementation as execution of the plan as the plan directs; define success as accomplishment of objectives; have little regard for unintended effects; assume sufficiency and neutrality of expert knowledge; attribute success to prior planning and specification; and treats the context as a given. Interactive models, on the other hand, describe educational planning as a process of bargaining, negotiating and exercising power; are more responsive to educational and social contexts; define success as movement forward; assume that meaningful action presupposes understanding and that legitimate action presupposes agreement; are adaptive to changing circumstances; view initial goals not as permanent benchmarks but as suggested directions to be discussed, modified, or replaced; define implementation as agreements to ‘work things out’; and attribute success to ongoing negotiation and trade-offs. Adams concludes his analysis with the observation that “Interactive planning models, which suggest an interpretive view of the social world and emphasis on shared understandings, appear to be of greater potential value for educational planning than rational models” (p. 18). Hamilton (1991, p. 21) supports this position: “The alternative perspective [to rational planning] emphasizes the importance of values, beliefs, power, collaboration, consensus building, conflict, negotiation,



and willfulness in planning. Appreciating the social and political elements of planning helps to ensure that people coordinating and steering the planning process remain attuned to their moral perspectives when making decisions that affect others." Adams' framework for differentiating planning models suggests that it is not so much the concepts that are central to a model that determine whether it is rational or otherwise, but rather the approach taken during planning, the underlying assumptions of those engaged in planning, and what issues are deliberately placed in the foreground as planning progresses.

### Challenges to Rational Planning

Following are brief characterizations of four challenges to rational planning. These characterizations are necessarily brief and oversimplified, but they are intended to convey the essence of these perspectives and to hint at their implications for planning theory.

- **Feminism Challenge**—Feminist analyses of many sorts have highlighted fundamental structural inequalities that prevent women from enjoying the same opportunities as men. Although feminist analyses have only recently been extended to planning theory, there are several important flaws in traditional planning approaches that must be acknowledged. One of these is that context—and the power relations that exist within the context—is often ignored. When context is ignored, or not subjected to critical analysis, the interests being served by "rational planning" are not identified. A second flaw is that few models based on rational assumptions acknowledge the different ways that women and men communicate and reason. Tannen (1990), for example, points out that conversations among men and women should be viewed as cross-cultural communication with all of the complexities and difficulties implied: "If women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy, while men speak and hear a language of status and independence, then communication between men and women can be like cross-cultural communication, prey to a clash of conversational styles. Instead of different dialects, it has been said they speak different genderlects" (p. 42). Ridgeway (1992), among others, has identified important differences in the way that women and men interact in task settings where decisions must be made. Smith-Lovin and Robinson (1992) reported on gender differences in conversational dynamics that have important implications for planning processes. Moser (1993) has studied planning processes in international development and has found traditional planning approaches so wanting that she has developed a "gender planning" framework that places gender differences in the foreground and uses power relations based on gender as the lens through which development planning is viewed. These few examples indicate the complexities involved in planning interactions that are simply not acknowledged in traditional planning models.

- **Bounded Rationality Challenge**—Rationality is discussed from both descriptive and normative perspectives (Elster, 1989). The descriptive perspective suggests that people are rational because they make economic and other decisions following a predictable pattern that maximizes the chances that the goals they value will be achieved. The normative perspective suggests that it is good to be rational because doing so provides a basis for communication and can lead to effective and efficient achievement of goals—individually and collectively. Elster (1986) summarizes the classical view of rationality as follows: "In order to justify and explain behaviour, rational-choice theory appeals to three distinct elements in the choice

situation. The first element is the feasible set, i.e. the set of all courses of action which (are rationally believed to) satisfy various logical, physical and economic constraints. The second is (a set of rational beliefs about) the causal structure of the situation, which determines what courses of action will lead to what outcomes. The third is a subjective ranking of the feasible alternatives, usually derived from a ranking of the outcomes to which they (are expected to) lead. To act rationally, then, simply means to choose the highest-ranked element in the feasible set" (p. 4). Yet as Zey (1992) points out, most of the assumptions that undergird this process can be called into question, so the notion of "bounded rationality" has been proposed to highlight the limitations of rational-choice theory as descriptive of how decisions *are* made or as a normative theory to suggest how planning decisions *should be* made.

- **Postmodern Challenge**—Postmodernism can be viewed as a transformed way of thinking about the world in which the dominant conventions governing discourse and the legitimation of knowledge claims are replaced by fundamentally different processes that are still being formed. According to Lyotard (1984), a simplified definition of postmodernism is "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv). Metanarratives are, in one sense, knowledge claims produced by objective "science" that do not consider alternative claims developed outside the framework of objective science. The philosophical focus of the postmodern critique is epistemology with one important manifestation of the analysis being social criticism.

From the perspective of planning, incredulity toward metanarratives challenges reason and rationality as the primary means of reaching understanding and the primary basis for taking action. In culture, art, architecture, social relations and education, the postmodern challenge forces a reconsideration of foundational assumptions, perspectives and practices. Although the implications of postmodernism for educational planning are still forming, what is clear now is that by questioning the fundamental assumptions of science, reason and rationality, the postmodernists have forced a reconsideration of how educators think about and carry out their work.

- **Empowerment Challenge**—In a fashion similar to that of feminists, Paulo Freire has developed a form of democratic educational planning that challenges structures in society that reproduce inequalities. His literacy work involves a form of planning that foregrounds the life situation of the oppressed and uses the learners' reflections on their everyday experiences of oppression—expressed and discussed in their own words—as the focus of the curriculum. In Freire's method, planning is collaborative; learners empower themselves by gaining literacy skills and the capacity to both question and challenge the forces that oppress them. "A Freirean critical teacher is a problem-poser who asks thought-provoking questions and who encourages students to ask their own questions. Through problem-posing, students learn to question answers rather than merely to answer questions. In this pedagogy, students experience education as something they do, not as something done to them" (Shor, 1993, p. 26.).

There are several clear implications for planning that follow from Freire's approach. First, learners must be involved in planning and must come to the belief that they can change their life circumstances through their own actions. Second, the context of learning must be in the foreground and the local circumstances of the learners must be the starting point for developing the curriculum. Third, an awareness and analysis of power relations and whose

interests are being served by the structures of society—including educational structures—are a central part of the educational process.

### Responding to the Challenges

It is clear that the challenges raised above must be addressed if planning theory and practice are to continue to improve. What, precisely, it means to improve theory and practice could be the subject of another paper. In brief, though, it does seem important that if planning theory is to serve its two main purposes well—those being to describe how planning does occur and prescribe how it should occur—there will have to be some major development work done in adult education. Based on the published accounts of Freire's followers and feminist educators, it seems that planning practice has outstripped planning theory by a substantial margin. That is, the alternative practices suggested by the challenges to rational planning have been tried and found better than those suggested by strictly rational models. A good example of how adult education theorists are responding to the challenge can be found in the recently published work of Cervero and Wilson (1994) that frames planning as a process of negotiation carried out in a substantively democratic environment that places power and politics firmly in the foreground. Their model and the cases they use to illustrate the model, reflect the challenges identified above and suggest that a model that foregrounds rather than masks the political character of educational planning will be useful in both understanding and practicing planning.

Another parallel approach that may be useful is one based on posing and answering questions. This approach is certainly not new since Tyler's (1949) curriculum design model from which many in adult education have evolved was essentially a question-based approach. The questions that Tyler posed as a framework for educational planning are still relevant today, but he failed to ask many questions that are central to an expanded view of planning and did not acknowledge the importance of values, participation, negotiation and politics. A question- [and questioning-] oriented approach to educational planning that neither assumes how the questions would or should be answered, nor assumes what the range of possible answers might be would respond to many of the challenges identified above while still providing a framework to guide the work of planners. The adequacy and acceptance of any planning model today seems dependent on how well it accommodates new and emerging perspectives on the aims and processes of education.

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## **DISCOURSE, POWER RELATIONS AND MALE BIAS: REFRAMING THE FIELD**

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper uses both feminist and adult education literature to create a framework which can be used to examine the adult education literature and research in terms of androcentricity.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

There appears to be an irreconcilable distance between the calls for a sensitivity to feminist issues and our field's responses to that call. It may be that, for many, the discourse around feminism has begun in mid-flight, that they lack a clear understanding about the elements which foster male-biased research, and conversely which could inhibit them.

Given the above, it is the intention of this paper to provide a framework which can be used to analyze adult education research in terms of its male bias. In order to create that framework, this paper first clarifies the notions of androcentricity and the feminist agendas. It then identifies the major sites within the research process through which androcentricity is expressed. Within each category, the specific mechanisms of oppression are examined through the lens of the feminist literature. Parallel literature from the field of adult education is placed within each category. The paper concludes by exploring the nature and possible uses of the framework for reframing the field.

### **MALE BIAS AND FEMINIST AGENDAS**

Very basically, male bias is a way of seeing the world which prioritizes the male agenda. Men's activities, attributes and viewpoints are promulgated over those of women and topics of concern and importance to women are deemed to be of secondary interest. Since this androcentric orientation dominates traditional research (Eichler, 1991; Falco, 1987; Harding, 1986), research which purports to be gender-blind is inevitably androcentric.

The feminist agenda has a different focus to the androcentric one. However, to select one agenda which is identifiably feminist is difficult. Women of class, colour, ethnicity and sexual orientation are reshaping and challenging traditional feminist discourses about research. None the less, feminists share a common concern for the "overlapping and multiple forms of [women's] oppression" (Weiler, 1991, p. 469). Our research is grounded in views which focus on the social construction of women and our "experience of and acting against perceived oppression" (Stanley, 1990, p. 14).

To support feminist agendas, it is not necessary that researchers adopt a "gynocentric" approach (Eichler, 1991, p. 5) and view the world solely from a female perspective. Neither is it necessary that we adopt a separatist feminist methodology. Remediation of a male bias can begin by understanding how the discourse of research is conducted and how power relations are expressed.

### **DISCOURSE**

The discourse which surrounds research is one site through which androcentricity is expressed. By creating dualities and by deleting women from the discourse, the literature misrepresents the experiences, activities and potentials of women.

#### **Duality**

When the 'hard' juxtapositioning of concepts occurs, characteristics are reified as static rather than dynamic, and as 'pure' and independent rather than overlapping and interdependent. Inevitably such reification leads to evaluation and eventually the valuing of one concept above the other. Feminists are concerned primarily with the juxtapositioning of female with male, public with private and subject with object.

In the first instance, researchers place females in opposition to men. They treat them as two distinct biological groupings rather than as two groups with overlapping social characteristics (Eichler, 1991). This ensures that differences between the sexes rather than differences within the sexes dominate the discourse. This duality tends to eliminate the

complexities of ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and to avoid an analysis of power relationships within and between the sexes (Pugh, 1990). Having created a dichotomous positioning, researchers then tend to cast in stone the differences which emerge and to name the white heterosexual male as norm and the female as deviant or deficient in relationship to that norm. Over time, this difference tends to become reified and viewed as women's 'natural' inferiority.

In the second instance, researchers juxtapose the public against the private sphere. The public sphere is defined as the domain of the political, the intellectual and full-time paid employment. The private sphere is associated with the familial, the domestic, the sensuous and unpaid employment. Men are allocated to the public sphere and women to the private sphere.

When these categories are embedded within the research project as unexamined, underlying assumptions, there are two consequences. First, they ensure that women's activities and concerns are treated as mutually exclusive to men's activities and concerns. Second, they identify particular roles and characteristics such as submission, nurturing and caring, as distinctively the role of women and other roles, such as domination, leadership and decision-making as the role of men. In the final instance, objectivity is cast against subjectivity. In the former case, the researchers' interpretations are viewed as remote from a standardized research process. In the latter case, researchers are seen to be engaged in a process which is an expression of their dislikes, desires, aversions and private experiences (Harding, 1986).

Objectivity, associated with the dominant research paradigm, negates feminist agendas (Harding, 1986, 1987; Keller, 1992; Smith, 1987a, 1987b; Weiler, 1991). First, the experiences and activities of women are taken from the women and translated into impersonal data by the researcher. Second, given the inherently male bias of traditional research, the interpretation of the research data is made from a male standpoint. Finally, the notion of objectivity fosters a conceptualization of women as the subject, that is, fixed passively in a static social structure. This is the antithesis of the feminist view of women as constantly socially constructed, reconstructed and reconstructing within historically determined structures.

#### **Related adult education literature**

Within our literature, some authors have criticized the juxtapositioning of women to men and emphasized the multiple realities of those categorized as 'woman' (Ball, 1992; Boshier, 1991; Collard and Stalker, 1991; Faith, 1988; Luttrell, 1988; Stalker, 1994 in press a; Thompson, 1983). Some authors specify the need to explore gender difference in different cultures as well as within our own cultures (Deshler and Hagan, 1989; Hart, 1992) or to create long term goals to integrate male/female perspectives in our research (Faith, 1988; Ohliger, 1989).

Hayes' work (1992) confirms the existence in our literature of a reductionistic view of women. She found that research publications often identified gender in as a variable yet seldom moved beyond stereotypical, dichotomous characterizations of women and men. Some researchers indicated that this kind of focus on women as 'separate' could result in the allocation of women's issues to women and lead to ignoring women as a mainstream item which concerns us all (Deshler, 1989; Oglesby, Krajnc and Mbilinyi, 1989).

Other authors have noted the juxtapositioning of public to private spheres. Some (Bernard and Gayfer, 1983; Hart, 1992; Jarvis, 1985; Luttrell, 1988; Thompson, 1983) place their analyses of this duality in terms of the sexual division of labour. They focus on the separation of paid work from unpaid work, and of emotional labour from objective labour. These divisions are then linked to the polarization of women from men and the reification of the 'feminine' and the 'masculine'. Thompson (1983) does an extensive explication of this phenomenon and identifies domestically useful knowledge which is associated with the private sphere yet serves the interests of the public sphere.

Finally, some have critiqued the dichotomous representation of objectivity and subjectivity in relation to feminist agendas. Thompson (1983) argues tersely that objectivity is no more than institutionalised male subjectivity. Others note the false dichotomy between feelings and thought and discuss the advantages of a more holistic, pluralistic, integrated approach to the concepts (Luttrell, 1988; Warren, 1987). Still others discuss the dialectic consciousness in which one holds a dual perspective of herself as both marginal and central;

outside and able to see the differences between herself and others yet within and able to see the similarities (Hart, 1992; Stalker, 1994, in press a).

### **Deletion**

Androcentricity is also supported by the deletion of women from the discourse of the field. The resultant "gynopia" or female invisibility (Eichler, 1991, p. 27) is problematic, for, if women's issues and concerns become invisible, then that base of knowledge, moral sanction and action is erased from the literature. Further, in that deletion, women of differing class, colour, ethnicity and sexual orientation become a "double minority" (McKay, 1983, p. 144) who are invisible because of both gender and 'difference'.

The deletion of women happens in two basic ways. First, at the most fundamental level, it happens through language (Spender, 1980). Women can be deleted from the language in several ways. It occurs, for example, when male specific terms are used for generic purposes. Thus researchers insensitive to feminist agendas use terms like 'chairman' and 'fireman' rather than terms like 'chairperson' and 'firefighter'. The language used in formal research activities also may exclude women. The research discussion may suggest generalizability, for example, although the instruments were developed, tested and interpreted for men only. Similarly, overgeneral titles may hide the exclusively male or female nature of the sample (Eichler, 1991).

Second, women are excluded from the discourse through deletion from the history of the discourse. Consequently, men are written into history as actors and agents of change while women remain nameless, passive bystanders (Rowbotham, 1973). At the same time, the unnatural nature of patriarchy and the challenges against it are lost (Allen, 1986). As well, the topics of a woman-centred history are lost. Issues such as marriage, divorce and domestic politics, obstetrics, gynaecology, birth control and sexuality disappear or are marginalized.

### **Related adult education literature**

Within the adult education literature, the phenomenon of deletion has been dealt with by several authors. A few have dealt specifically with the deletion of women from the language and noted that such procedures effectively remove women from the discourse (Parsons, 1990; Thompson, 1983; Walker, 1986). Recently researchers have begun to identify the organizations and issues which have been lost from our history. Hugo (1990) states that our research literature has focussed primarily on public sphere organizations such as governments, universities and professional associations to the detriment of research into the private spheres of church, hospitals, family and community centres. Similarly, Hayes (1992) found researchers gave low priority to private sphere issues concerning women, gender and women's educational programmes.

### **POWER RELATIONS**

As we have seen above, the discourse of adult education researchers can locate women's concerns and activities as marginal to those of men. The ideological and institutional structures which sustain research support this position.

#### **Ideological structures**

Powerful ideological structures define what is 'genuine' knowledge, its legitimate sources and its limits in support of the male agenda. Since ideological structures legitimate some ways of being and knowing while devaluing others, those who initiate, create and maintain them have power over the social discourse of images, vocabularies, concepts, knowledge of and methods of knowing. A fundamental way in which power is established and maintained is related to the dichotomous discourse which surrounds the notion of subjectivity and objectivity. Although these notions were discussed earlier under duality, the emphasis here will be on the implications for power.

Traditionally, objectivity is valued over subjectivity as a method of knowing. In this kind of research the use, analyses, understanding and interpretation of ways of being and knowing are removed from the knower. For women, it means that their experiences and actions are viewed as 'object' and their constitution of their own subjective selves is negated. This alienates women from their experiences, and dismisses or diminishes their agency. It removes their role as actors who create, negotiate, and re-recreate their lives. It negates women's real experiences



of power, resistance and contestation. It substitutes for that dynamic vision a portrait of women located in a non-negotiable, fixed position (Griffith and Smith, 1987; Smith, 1987a; Weiler, 1991). Further, by creating a universalized position for women, it ignores the complexity of the socially constructed notion of 'women' and the challenges made to that category by the social relations between men and women and by women of differing class, colour ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Interwoven with objectivity and equally powerful in disempowering women is the notion that research is neutral. It is, of course, a well debated aspect of the research enterprise whether research is, or indeed should be, neutral. Some researchers view their theorizing and practice as independent of the contexts within which they develop. They suggest that 'good' research is a value-free, impartial science. For other researchers this stance is problematic. We emphasize that knowledge production is derived from the world-views, assumptions and frameworks of the producers (Fraser, 1989; Keller, 1992; Stanley and Wise, 1990). At a minimum, we suggest that neutrality is a theoretical ideal rather than realizable objective.

Feminist researchers reject, to varying degrees, the notion of research as neutral. They do this against a backdrop of shared concerns for the social construction of women and related issues of oppression. Indeed, some researchers suggest it is necessary to "bring together scholarship and advocacy in order to generate new ways of knowing that interrupt power imbalances" (Lather, 1991, p. 12).

#### **Related adult education literature**

Some authors emphasize the ways in which women understand and construct their subjectives selves (Ball, 1992; Luttrell, 1988). Others highlight the dynamic agency and resistance of women in this process (McLaren, 1987) and argue for women's active involvement in, and ownership of, the research process (Bernard and Gayfer, 1983). Several authors have noted explicitly the non-neutral nature of research in relation to feminist agendas (Walker, 1986; Warren, 1987). Ball (1992) asks us to acknowledge and examine the androcentric and racist ideological and political values which underlie our research and to treat research as praxis. Similarly, Warren warns us to notice the "cultural fingerprints" which are the main determinants of "what should be studied, what requires explanation, and what is of interest" (1987, p. 14). Some authors extend the argument and suggest that feminist agendas, theorizing, political commitment and active participation in social change are inextricably linked to the research process (Ball, 1992; Cevero, 1991).

#### **Institutional structures**

The production of androcentric knowledge is strengthened within ideological structures by institutional structures. Within organizations, it is evident that men dominate its ownership and control, its positions of status and authority and its cultural values (Burrell and Hearn, 1989; Smith, 1987a, 1987b). They control the structural mechanisms, that is, the rulings, the management and the administration of the organizations. These institutional structures defend male privilege and exclude women (Reardon, 1985). They foster "institutionalized forms of violence" (Ramazanoglu, p. 61, 1987) which exclude women from doing "serious science" in a more systematic way than "from any other activity except frontline warfare" (Harding, 1986, p. 64).

This violence occurs in both explicit and implicit ways. In the first instance, physical violence is practiced against women in the context of male dominated rulings, management and administration which tolerate that behaviour. Volumes of literature exist on this issue. Paludi and Barickman (1991) provide a contemporary bibliography of this work. In the second instance, violence occurs in more subtle ways. Male-dominated hierarchies control academic inputs and outputs through an "academic mode of production" (Stanley, 1990, p. 3) which determines who will control the product and processes of research.

The academic mode of production is protected primarily by male gatekeepers who give priority to the male agenda (Smith, 1987a). They favour men in the recruitment and promotion of staff, allocation of research funds, assessment and publication. In sum, they ensure that the processes and production of knowledge are male-biased (Stanley, 1990).



### Related adult education literature

Within the field of adult education, authors have noted the institutional structures which preserve androcentricity. In the first instance, some have noted the explicit violence against women (Collard and Stalker, 1991; Rockhill, 1987; Stalker, 1994, in press b). They explore the ways in which power is acted out through sexuality and violence and the ways in which women resist that oppression. In the second instance some authors note the structural positioning and gatekeeping power of men (Ball, 1992; Hugo, 1990; Hughes and Kennedy, 1985; Luttrell, 1988; Parsons, 1990; Stalker, 1994, in press a, b). They highlight the control that men have over "the currency of thought" (Thompson, 1983, p. 20) and explore the role of patriarchal hierarchies in maintaining the institutional and professional culture which controls the academic mode of production (Ball, 1992; Gaskell and McLaren, 1987). Also noted is women's lack of access to male academics' deliberations and to the mechanisms through which they distribute power and the resultant restrictions on outcomes such as financial sponsorship, professional career development and publications (Cunningham, 1991; Stalker, 1994, in press a; Thompson, 1983).

### THE FRAMEWORK

This paper has created a framework to analyze adult education research in terms of its androcentricity. On its vertical axis, the framework identifies two major sites within the research process through which androcentricity is expressed. The first site, discourse, is subdivided into duality and deletion. The second site, power, is subdivided into ideological and institutional structures. The framework is more than a uni-dimensional template for situating literature in our field, however. It also has depth and breadth. Along the other horizontal axis, this framework measures the androcentric nature of the research. It provides a continuum which stretches from misogynistic to feminist. Given the argument that neutral research is inherently androcentric, the mid-point on the scale is thus labelled male biased.

In the third dimension, the framework measures the theoretical depth of the research. At its most easily accessible and shallow end, is located research which makes tokenistic and ritualistic acknowledgment of feminist agendas. At its less accessible and theoretically deep end, is research which acknowledges the dynamic, relational and socially constructed nature of women's realities and oppression.

This framework offers a systematic way to evaluate research in terms of feminist agendas. Used as a guide to future empirical research, it can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current research literature and direct us to areas which need further examination and theorizing.

### CONCLUSION

I began this paper by suggesting that androcentric behaviours may be related to a lack of a clear understanding of the elements which foster male-biased research. However, it should be clear that in 1994, apologetic confusion over feminist agendas no longer suffices. Research in the field can only be creditable if it moves from an androcentric base toward a more gender sensitive base.

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## ADULT EDUCATION AS *ETHICAL* AND *MORAL* MEANING THROUGH ACTION

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### *Introductory Remarks*

I want to (1) show how adult learning and adult education are constituted as meaning through normative action; (2) show why the most crucial problem separating adult educators in the United States into somewhat hostile camps is due partially to a critical failure to distinguish two kinds of normative theories of human action and conduct; and (3) show how this separation might be reduced and even eliminated through phenomenological distinctions which can be made between two very common kinds of human perceptions of phenomena as normative conduct.

An important distinction can be made between two principal kinds of constitution of meaning through action which appear to be characteristic of adult education. The first kind of constitution of meaning through action is what we normally term the realization, growth, and development of individual persons. There are many degrees of this. In philosophical terms we may say that this is the domain of *ethics* in adult education.

The second principal kind of constitution of meaning through action is through what we usually conceive as social action and social reform effected through such programmatic movements as literacy education, economic reform, and neighborhood development. In philosophical terms this can be seen as the province of *moral philosophy* in adult education.

Although I believe the distinction between *ethics* and *moral philosophy* is vital, it is a distinction rarely made by philosophers. I am not certain that I have ever seen it made in adult education literature. Whereas philosophers might be forgiven for failing to make this distinction, adult educators cannot be forgiven for failing to make it. Why do I claim this? the short answer to this question is the one Karl Marx offered: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in different ways; the point is to change it."

Many adult educators believe that viewing adult education as work toward self-realization and growth of persons and as work toward social reform are quite separate and dichotomous perspectives and professional commitments. They seem to believe that these two thrusts of adult education--the *ethical* or the *moral* ways--are separated by a chasm of praxis so far across that they as professionals, being unable either to locate or to construct the relevant practical bridge of praxis across this chasm, must work at one edge or the other but not both. These points can be made even more explicit in the following way.

There is a view (although it is not my view) concerning adult education in the United States which runs something like this: adult education is a "field" which "continues to develop along an individualism/social reform 'fault line' which concerns academics, researchers, and practitioners" and which has been influenced by "pragmatism, naturalism, and ethics of individual conduct." These influences "help account for the field's attraction to pragmatic liberal-humanistic ethics and the field's on-going interest in the 'hard sciences' for research methods" (Quigley, 1991).

Moreover, this view sees adult education agenda as having been shaped increasingly by federal and state agencies and by giant foundations such as the Ford, Carnegie, and Kellogg foundations, with all of these agencies and foundations exerting their special

hegemonic political ideologies. One devastating result of these externally funded agenda has been the intrusion of a hard core commitment to technical rationality (fused with funding) looked upon as manna from heaven by chronically over-worked and acutely under-funded adult educators and programs which have come to dominate this field of adult education. Therefore, this view continues, we have a present situation in which the "fault line" of individualism and social reform is ever-deepening and ever-widening, while both parties to the fault are increasingly inundated by the fragmentizing (and more heavily funded) demands of external sources articulating the reductionistic nuts and bolts programs generated too often by technical rationality.

One might or might not agree with this view of adult education in the United States. In any case certain problems clearly emerge. This view claims that adult education is a "field" (meaning a discipline); that both sides of the fault-line of individualism and social reform have been influenced by the pragmatic philosophies of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, and their influence on Eduard Lindeman, Malcolm Knowles, Jack Mezirow and on so many other major figures who have helped to create the stock of literature in adult education over the past several decades. And it is also quite clear that the funding agencies and foundations often have been guided by what have been understood as heavily "pragmatic" goals. It is clear, also, that pragmatic philosophies have come to be seen as having contributed mixed, and very inconsistent blessings. One could even suggest that pragmatic philosophies have come to be viewed as schizophrenia. But this schizophrenia does not intend the "fault line" of a "divided mind" so much as a "broken heart" concerning the individualism/social reform split in the light of planetary problems.

It would be possible to assess the full import of this view only if we could *all* agree on just what it is we are *all* calling "adult education." By *all* here I mean not only the principal representatives of the dominant ideological hegemonies within mainstream adult education in the United States. I also mean, and very fundamentally mean, each and every invisibilized person and community, each and every marginalized person and community, each and every gender-excluded person or community due the fruits and enlightenments of adult educators doing what they have believed to be the right things.

There are several problems with this view of adult education. It claims that adult education is a field or discipline. Using this benchmark it surveys the entirety of adult education and finds that this discipline lacks the right foundation, the right definitions of essential terms, the right conceptions and right goals. And this view also seems to suggest that some of the wrong people have been in control of the central thrusts of this discipline during the last seven decades or so. I say again that you may or may not agree with this version of adult education. I reiterate that this is not my own view.

This view of adult education is self-contradictory. It presupposes that adult education is a discipline, but when adult educators are most rigorously attending to their unique subject-matter--the intersubjectivity of the adult educations of person (Stanage, 1987)<sup>1</sup>--their work generally does not meet any of the necessary criteria which knowledge constituting a discipline must meet: generally agreed-upon historical and theoretical foundations, and

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<sup>1</sup>The most prominent essential structurings of adult educations of person include feeling(s), experiencing(s), and consciousness(s). Throughout my work in both philosophy and in philosophical reflections on special phenomena within contextualized learning which has come to be known as adult education the concept person has held a place of primary and consistent importance.



generally agreed-upon definitions of the most essential terms, goals and research methodologies, for example. Therefore, paradoxically, an adult educator doing the most disciplined research, for example, is doing research appropriate to some discipline, but not to a discipline called adult education, since adult education per se cannot be a discipline. Deans of graduate schools and deans of colleges of liberal arts and sciences have often called attention to this self-contradiction.

In philosophical terms, it would at first appear that those adult educators are committed to a dichotomy between normative theories of human conduct which most philosophers could not accept, viz., that a philosopher reflecting on human conduct would have to be committed either to a normative theory of *ethics* or to a normative theory of *morality*, but not to both. I will discuss these two normative theories shortly. A discussion of the important distinction between a *normative ethical theory* and a *normative moral theory* may help us to understand why the alleged chasm between individual realization and social reform in adult education is an illusory and false perception, and why the two are falsely dichotomized as either/or rather than distinguished as both...and.

Many philosophers make no important distinctions between ethics and morality, as I have noted. They simply collapse the two concepts and use them interchangeably in referring to the same phenomena. As a consequence they find no real difficulties in speaking of a person's *ethics* or a person's *morals* as though they were the same phenomena. Nor do these philosophers see any real difficulty in speaking interchangeably of either the *ethics* of a group or the *morals* of a group. I believe that the failure to distinguish *ethics* and *morality* makes it very difficult or even impossible to understand rather common personal and social phenomena which I will discuss shortly. The phenomena I want to focus on are the very clear feelings, intuitions and perceptions we sometimes have that we have acted, or that someone else has acted, *ethically but immorally* in performing a single act of conduct, or of having acted *unethically but morally* in performing a given act of conduct.

As I try to make these distinctions clear and helpful it is important to review the etymologies of these two terms. *Ethics* comes from the Greek word, *ἦθος*, *ethos*, the character, inner disposition, or conscience of an individual person living within a social group such as a family, community, culture, or society. The principal focus is on the person. *Morality* derives from the Latin word, *more*, which refers to customs, norms, and folkways of a family, community, culture and society within which a person lives. The principal focus here is on the group.

Although the two notions are not completely separable, they clearly are distinguishable. The distinction lies, I believe, in the phenomena clustered together and distinguishable on the one hand as person and on the other as culture. In phenomenological terms we may distinguish the phenomena of (a) person-in-culture from the phenomena of (b) culture-in-person. *Ethics* most relevantly applies to the first case, and *morality* to the second case. This distinction makes it possible to understand more clearly the anguish and ambivalence of many young men in the United States during that outrageous war with Viet Nam, for example. I believe that the following four kinds of cases which were very common among young men of draft age in the United States during that awful period can be clarified and more richly understood with this distinction between *ethics* and *morality* before us:

(a) A young man and his family and community all believe the war to be a just war. The young man's own beliefs and those of his family and community play crucial roles in

leading him to join the navy in order to "fight for his country." *He is acting both ethically and morally within the unity of the same action of joining the navy.*

(b) Another young man conscientiously opposes the war, thereby concurring with his family and his community, both of which oppose all wars. He becomes a conscientious objector, refuses to enter the armed services, and either performs alternative service or is sent to prison. *He is acting both ethically and morally in the same act of refusal.*

(c) Another young man lives in a family and community with whom he is consistently at odds over the war. Although he is pressured by his family and the community to enter the armed forces, he follows the lead of his conscience and goes to Canada. *This young man is acting ethically but immorally within the unity of the same act which both articulates his conscience and his rejection of the views of his family, community, and country.*

(d) Finally, a young man believes that the war is unjust, but his family and his community strongly support the war. He goes against his conscience and his own beliefs and joins the army, thereby acceding to the strong beliefs of his family, peers, and community that the war is just. *This young man is acting unethically but morally in the same act of joining the army.*

It is clear that at least one normative theory of *ethics* and one normative theory of *morality* as theories of right conduct are always commingled in adult education. These theories are (a) the *ethics of self-realization* and (b) the *morality of utilitarianism* respectively. These theories are easily identifiable. The hard evidence which leads one to this conclusion is found in the full range of adult education practices within contextualized adult learning situations. For example, some adults primarily want to grow as persons, re-train for jobs or better jobs, or just have a chance for a better life. The *ethics of self-realization* is the paradigm normative theory of *ethics* for these personal actions. The *ethics of self-realization* presupposes that each and every person ought to realize and actualize the qualitatively fullest life possible for that person, whatever the originating circumstances in that person's life may be or may have been.

Other persons may act primarily to make their neighborhoods a safer place to live and their schools better learning environments for their children. The *moral theory of utilitarianism* is the paradigm normative theory for understanding and explaining these social and community concerns. *Utilitarianism* presupposes that all human relationships ought to be articulated in accordance with the principle of utility, or the greatest happiness principle: pleasure should be maximized, and pain should be minimized, for the greatest number of persons, whatever the originations of their circumstances in life.

In academic contexts of philosophical discourse generally, these two theories are highly conflictive theories of normative or prescriptive human conduct, of distinguishing what human conduct is from what it ought-to-be in human conduct. But they are conflictive only if *ethics* and *morals* are presupposed as interchangeable, and it is further presupposed that both theories are *ethical theories*, or that both are *moral theories*. Complicating the matter further, many philosophers neither appreciate nor heed the fact that philosophers can distinguish relevant intellectual regions of the world, problematize interesting areas of these regions, and then merely "do philosophy" without any urgent need to apply their philosophical research to the lifeworlds of persons and groups.

Typically, the philosophical work performed will be divided into traditional areas such as ethics/moral philosophy (both taken together as value theory or kalology, from the Greek words *καλόν*, *kalon*, the morally beautiful, the ideal good, and the summum bonum, and *λόγος*, *logos*, word, speech, discourse, reason), metaphysics, epistemology, logic, aesthetics, and a great many areas termed "philosophy of..." for example, science, religion, culture, or even physics, biology, and so forth. Doing philosophy routinely (although certainly not always) means performing thought experiments about these abstracted intellectual regions of the world and performing conceptual analyses toward the goal of conceptual clarity without necessarily facing any pressing need to change the world or any part of it. This was the focus of Karl Marx's scathing--but all too accurate--criticism that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways; the point is to *change* it."

It has become very clear to me, as one who does philosophy within adult education contexts, that adult educators cannot afford the philosophers' luxury of merely performing thought experiments, descriptions, and logical argumentation toward clarifying their concepts and sharpening the conceptual tools of their trade toward the always-proximate goal of persuading other philosophers of the substantial truth of philosophical positions or of choosing a philosophical foundation for their practices and research. Adult educators are faced with the awesome task of inquiring into the natural worlds and lifeworlds of persons and social groups in order to help with the process of understanding self and others, precisely in order to facilitate needed change, healing, and improvement of these worlds. Therefore, adult educators are further called upon to perform prodigious feats of praxis in order to do the work to which they are committed. And they are expected to solve and resolve problems which the philosophers themselves generally have been unwilling or unable (or both) to resolve.

One of these problems which adult educators must solve, as I have tried to make clear, is the conflict between a *self-realization ethic* and a *utilitarian morality*. Philosophers may collapse *ethics* and *morality* and therefore find not a perceived irreconcilable conflict but rather merely differences in presuppositions, definitions of concepts, and arguments about right conduct between these two normative theories. Philosophers may be content simply to leave the matter there, having performed sophisticated conceptual and logical analyses of ways toward the good life with great skill, but with no urgency to apply their conclusions toward changing either persons' lives or the social world. Philosophers pay no great price for doing the former and failing to do the latter.

But whereas some adult educators also collapse *ethics* and *morality*, thereby mistaking the normative theory of *ethics* for the normative theory of *morality*, they have the further fixated belief that they must choose the one or the other but not both. Adult educators who fail to make the distinctions between these two normative theories to which I have called attention--unlike philosophers--pay a very high price indeed. The price they pay is their failure to understand that most important dimension of their work as normative meaning constituted through normative action in the world. And adult learners following the views of these adult educators as a consequence lose much in the way of rich understanding of the potentialities of their individual realization and empowerment as well as their understanding of the ways in which changes in their individual lives also change their worlds as well as change the worlds of others.

Why is this the case? In phenomenological terms, if *ethics* and *morals* conceptualize the same normative human phenomena for many adult educators then these educators will see themselves as working with both individuals and with groups whenever they are working with either of these primarily. They have collapsed the two normative theories into one theory, and it doesn't matter logically which conceptualization they personally prefer, although they may personally prefer the one name or the other. These educators will see no either/or kind of "fault line." Unfortunately, however, they may fail to distinguish individual persons from groups of persons in the process. This failure can easily be dogmatized into an unexamined ideology. Such ideologies are often found in adult education contexts.

But suppose adult educators distinguish, as I do, *ethics* (of individuals) and *morals* (of groups), as distinct but not separate normative theories of human conduct. There is no either/or "fault line" in this case either. But the reason is that the emphasis can be placed phenomenologically on *what* adult educators are doing and on *how* they go about doing it, as distinct from (although not separate from) a focus upon those persons with whom they are doing it. *What* and *how* adult educators will be doing it in this case will be facilitating the constitution of persons' normative meaning through normative action intermediated as adult education practices.

Let me put this important claim differently by referring back to my examples of the young men facing choices during the Viet Nam war. I believe those examples are analogous to adult educators and their work. In the midst of the wholeness and unity of their practices, these adult educators sometimes will be facilitatively working with persons through a focus on the phenomena of person-in-culture and sometimes on the phenomena of culture-in-person within the unity of the same practice (act) within their workplace.

But perhaps the analogy of these young men really is closer to the case of adult learners than to the case of adult educators. In the case of learners, their learning is the process of constituting normative meaning through normative action in their worlds at the same moment within the unity of each of their learning acts. Throughout these activities they may learn that all thinking is for the sake of action in the world. Ideally they are learning to learn this. Sometimes the focus of their learning may be on the constitutions of meaning through action as person-in-culture, but at other times on the constitutions of meaning through action as culture-in-person. But they can be distinguished within the unity of the same act. This fact suggests the "fault line" rests partially on the failure to distinguish two normative theories of human conduct.

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PHENOMENOLOGY AS AN INTERPRETIVE FRAME:  
THE EVOLUTION OF A RESEARCH METHOD  
FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW LEARNING IS EXPERIENCED IN  
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY GROUPS

thINQ

**ABSTRACT:** To make meaning of a three-year study of collaborative inquiry, thINQ, a group of five doctoral candidates, adopts phenomenology as an interpretive frame and discovers phenomenology-in-five-voices and collaborative phenomenology.

At a crucial stage in the study of how adults learn through collaborative inquiry, our group, thINQ, confronted two challenges: how to make meaning of our collaborative experience and how to convey the experience to others, holistically. We chose a route that merges two separate research traditions. In this paper we explain how the convergence of these two traditions provides a powerful vehicle for interpreting complex human experience.

In 1991, as a group of five doctoral candidates, we began to design a joint research project in which we would study the question, "What aspects of the collaborative inquiry process facilitate or impede adult learning?" Collaborative inquiry, as a research and learning process is one of several kinds of participatory research (Reason, 1994). Our introduction to the collaborative inquiry process came from reading Peter Reason's earlier edited books on what he and John Rowan then called "new paradigm research" (Reason and Rowan, 1981; Reason, 1988). In order to answer our research question, we initiated six different collaborative inquiry groups; in all, forty-one people participated (thINQ, 1993). All of the meetings of the six groups were taped and transcribed. Five groups met for one year and one group met for two years. After two years, we had amassed over 7,500 pages of transcribed verbatim reports which recorded the experiences of the six groups. In addition, our data included field notes, learning journals, and participant observer notes.

In Spring 1992, our dissertation advisor had introduced us to Max van Manen's, Researching Lived Experience. Although, on occasion, the term, *phenomenology*, arose in our discussions, there was no real understanding of its meaning for us; we had read van Manen's book, but at this stage of our development the impact of applying a phenomenological approach to our data was not fully grasped. It was not until Summer 1993, when we entered the making-sense stage of our study, that we began to realize how we might use phenomenology. We had made several attempts to analyze our data through coding procedures; in two exercises we predetermined topics and in another we allowed topics to emerge from the data. It quickly became obvious that our material was too extensive and dynamic to be analyzed in this way. We sought a technique that would permit us to present our material to others in a way that would convey the life of our group experiences. At a meeting in July 1993, van Manen's work was "rediscovered" as a member of the group read aloud a portion of the book; there was a tangible sigh, what we have come to refer to as the "aha" of synchronous group response. There was an intuitive recognition that we

had found the solution to our interpretive problem and a cognitive recognition that we needed to learn much more about phenomenology. This was a watershed moment for thINQ.

**Merging two research methods.** Our research project merged two separate research traditions; it captured the confluence of collaborative inquiry as a part of new paradigm research and hermeneutic phenomenology; both are major methods in qualitative research. Each of these qualitative methods is rooted in an interpretive research paradigm that can be traced to a philosophy of phenomenology and a constructivist ontology. This paper explains our collaborative inquiry process, describes why we felt it was necessary to adopt a phenomenological/hermeneutic approach to interpreting our data, and illustrates how the two traditions complement each other and our work.

**Collaborative inquiry.** Our inquiry was adapted from Reason's Human Inquiry in Action (1988). A collaborative inquiry group makes meaning through cycles of reflection and action, but would not normally have, as we did, a written verbatim record of all the reflection processes. We audiotaped and transcribed the meetings of the six different inquiry groups because we were engaged in dissertation research for which we saw verbatim transcripts as invaluable aids to answering our research question as well as creating the written reports of our research.

Collaborative inquiry is both a learning strategy and a research method. Reason maintains that the written research is secondary to the changes in the lives of collaborative inquirers. Reason believes that *cooperative inquiry*, a term he uses interchangeably with collaborative inquiry, represents a new paradigm of research toward action knowledge (1988, p. 9). But Reason does not give guidance on the analysis of data which is used to generate formal knowledge. The volume of data generated by our study necessitated our finding a method suitable to our text.

**Phenomenology and hermeneutics in human science.** We had conducted several exercises to analyze our text through data coding. We came to realize that by utilizing specific data analysis procedure, we had decided prematurely how to view the experience of learning in collaborative inquiry groups, rather than permitting the experience to determine the interpretation. Coding had positioned the selection of analytical method before the examination of the experience. Dissection of the experience was reminiscent of our experiences with reductionistic empiricism.

Beside being a philosophy that undergirds interpretive research, phenomenology is also a label that has been used to refer to a methodological strategy. However, there are no formulaic strategies for approaching the interpretation of phenomena. Prescriptive methods of phenomenology or hermeneutics were unavailable to thINQ because phenomenologists and hermeneuticists eschew prescribed techniques. The researcher must return to the phenomenon again and again, to determine the perspectives that best illustrate the phenomenon under investigation. Richard Palmer's aversion to methods in hermeneutics illustrates this point:

Method is an effort to measure or control from the side of the interpreter; it is the opposite of letting the phenomenon lead. . . Thus, method is in reality a form of dogmatism, separating the interpreter from the work, standing between it and him [sic], and barring him [sic] from experiencing the work in its fullness. Analytical seeing is blindness to experience; it is analytical blindness. (1969, p. 247)

Max van Manen's Researching Lived Experience, explains phenomenology as descriptive of how one orients to lived experience and hermeneutics as descriptive of how one interprets the "texts" of life. Van Manen states "much of educational research tends to pulverize life into minute abstracted fragments and particles that are of little use to practitioners" (1990, p. 7). This agreed with our data coding experiences; van Manen's holistic approach concatenated with our own holistic collaborative inquiry approach. The human science research perspective also "assumes that lived human experience is always more complex than the result of any singular description, and that there is always an element of the ineffable to life" (p. 16). This statement appealed to us, given the complex phenomenon of our study. Our questions fit closely into a phenomenology/ hermeneutics approach. Van Manen holds that hermeneutic phenomenology "tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: it is a descriptive (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an interpretive (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena" (p. 180). For van Manen, human science is synonymous with phenomenology and hermeneutics; he states, "From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And to *know* the world is profoundly to *be* in the world in a certain way, the act of researching--questioning--theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to *become* the world" (p. 5).

Although van Manen provides several avenues of phenomenological approach, thINQ continued to broaden its literature base. Up to this point we considered ourselves "one-book phenomenologists." In reading Donald E. Polkinghorne we were confronted with the concept that phenomenology does not represent a single process for research, nor do phenomenologists necessarily agree with one another. Polkinghorne contends: "Fruitful research in the human sciences needs to remain in a 'state of crisis'. . . it must question methodological assumptions, and it must experiment with various epistemological frameworks (1983, p. 9).

Most phenomenologists still adhere to Husserl's axiom "to the things themselves;" this encouraged thINQ to return to the experience of learning through collaborative inquiry. Don Ihde, in Experimental Phenomenology, provides fundamental phenomenological exercises which clarify a phenomenological approach to research

and visually illustrate the terms used in phenomenology. Schutz' interest in phenomenology, as it relates to social experience, is helpful in creating a framework to examine learning experience in a social context; but he maintains an individualistic approach to the analysis of social phenomena.

**A complementary alliance of two traditions.** In merging collaborative inquiry and phenomenology/hermeneutics, we forged a complementary alliance; each tradition resonated with the other's underlying assumptions. For example, both:

- \* Begin in the pre-reflective world.
- \* Depend on the practice of attunement or careful observation.
- \* Require learners to bracket off preconceptions and presuppositions.
- \* Involve the intentional framing and construction of reality.
- \* Are driven by inquiry or questioning.
- \* Accommodate the individual's idiosyncratic frame of reference.
- \* Dignify subjective knowing and inclusion of the affective domain.
- \* Involve recursive, cyclical and iterative processes.
- \* Evolve the tacit into linguistic forms.
- \* Are process-oriented, developmental forms.
- \* Are holistic in nature.
- \* Focus on lived experience to acquire meaning.
- \* Are discovery-oriented, emergent processes.
- \* Convey only partially the rich complexity of lived experience.

**The phenomenology of learning in collaborative inquiry.** We continually returned to the phenomenon and examined the experience for holistic themes that illustrate the experience. Themes are analogous to individual strands in a plaid fabric which must be seen as a whole to be fully understood. Each strand of color is important to the pattern; if removed, both the color strand and the plaid change identity. Themes are described through narratives which illuminate experience in a way that resonates with the reader. Each researcher repeatedly returned to the experience; then, through group discussion and reflection moved from individual phenomenology, which we call phenomenology-in-five-voices, to collaborative phenomenology.

**Phenomenology-in-five voices and collaborative phenomenology.** All of the literature we have discovered relates to phenomenology as realized by individuals, even when group phenomena were investigated. As collaborative learners, we have identified two new forms of phenomenology: phenomenology-in-five-voices and collaborative phenomenology. In the former, we reflected individually as we read and re-read the transcripts and noted stories, comments and dialogue that created patterns or articulated the phenomenon. To convey the multidimensional quality of the research, we used stories, metaphors and poetry as we wrote in our five distinctive voices.

Collaborative phenomenology creates clarity through a process which includes recursive writing, individual reflection and group reflection. This recursive process



continued over a period of months. Throughout the process we were conscious of the need for validity and critical subjectivity to avoid group think. The attempt to achieve consensual validity required consistent attention to distress and divergence within the group. There was a continual tension between working toward collaborative agreement and the desire to maintain our individual voices; these voices, however, are evident in our group discussions and in our writing.

**Exploring some themes.** To illustrate the multi-dimensionality of a phenomenological approach, we described three themes in relation to what we characterized earlier in this paper as the "aha" event:

- 1. Learning is experienced at an intersection of readiness and timeliness.** Although there may be recurring mention of a subject, there may not be great significance attached to it. On numerous occasions, phenomenology had been mentioned and we had read van Manen's text. However, we were not yet at the point at which we needed to analyze our data. Only when we turned our effort to making meaning did we become aware that our planned strategy for data analysis was inadequate. At this juncture, one member's reading aloud of a short passage from van Manen jolted us into recognizing how phenomenology might serve our needs.
- 2. Learning is experienced through cycles of ambiguity and clarity.** Once we identified phenomenology as an approach to be used in interpreting our text, it became apparent that our question was inadequate; we immediately saw the need to change the wording to "How is learning experienced in collaborative inquiry?" But our understanding of phenomenology was uncertain and ambiguous. We began several months of exploration into phenomenology to better understand it as an analytical tool. During this quest we drifted in and out of clarity.
- 3. Learning is experienced in the group when non-linguistic knowing becomes linguistic knowing.** Throughout the inquiry, there had been moments in which members sensed that some things were known before they could be articulated. In the "aha" incident, there was an immediate and intuitive sense, upon hearing van Manen's passage, that we had found the right method. We had previously referred to phenomenology, but our references implied its appropriateness without understanding it. After the "aha," we began to express our understanding of phenomenology, linguistically.

**Limitations of using phenomenology as a research method.** Phenomenology permits individual and collective perceptions of the meaning of an experience common to the researchers to emerge. Phenomenology distills information about the noetic modes of experience through the typification of themes; it is not intended to convey the content of the researchers' learning.

A research group preparing to engage in collaborative phenomenology should be prepared for the demands of authentic collaboration: discerning meaning in the

phenomenon studied is time-consuming and labor-intensive; tolerating ambiguity generates tension because the phenomenological process is evolutionary and cannot be fully articulated until completed; handling confrontation among researchers who view the same phenomenon from conflicting interpretations requires patience; and the findings of phenomenological research must proceed at the group's negotiated pace, not for the convenience of individuals. Phenomenology is a non-formulaic process and our dissertation research, employing this method, has an existential quality; it reflects what one group of researchers found at the juncture of a specific time and context. Other researchers investigating the same or similar phenomena at another time and place might find different results.

**Considerations for using phenomenology in future practice.** Collaborative meaning-making through phenomenology is a powerful process, enabling research groups or learning groups to build upon the knowledge of each member of the group in order to construct knowledge useful to the group in future practice. Adult education practitioners who employ phenomenology to interpret experience not only develop shared ownership of the group's constructed knowledge, but legitimize this kind of knowing. From our experience, the most attractive feature of phenomenology is its efficacy in capturing the spirit and vitality of adult education.

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## EFFECTS OF INCLUDING GENDER AND MULTICULTURAL COURSE CONTENT ON CLASSROOM DYNAMICS IN ADULT HIGHER EDUCATION CLASSES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FACULTY PERSPECTIVES

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**Abstract:** This qualitative study examined how instructors who include gender and multicultural course content view the effects of the inclusion of those issues on the classroom dynamics in their classes.

We live in a culturally diverse society. While the role of adult and higher education in responding to the educational needs of a multicultural society is discussed in many circles, there is a lack of research-based literature that addresses how best to deal with or include multicultural issues in the classroom in order to provide a positive and broadening educational experience for all involved in the class. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative study was to determine faculty perceptions of the effects of the inclusion of gender or multicultural course content on the classroom dynamics in adult higher education classes.

### RELATED LITERATURE

There is no one definition of "multicultural education" and different authors at all educational levels use the term in different ways to cover everything from single group studies, such as approaches to dealing with ESOL students, to the inclusion of gender or disability concerns, to curriculum transformation projects (Banks, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). While there is a developing body of literature dealing with multicultural concerns in adult education (cf. Cassara, 1990; Ross-Gordon & Briscoe, 1990), and some research and/or discussion of power relations in the classroom (Shor, 1992; Tisdell, 1993), there is a paucity of literature that addresses how the inclusion of gender and multicultural course content affects classroom dynamics specifically in an adult higher education setting. Central to the debate within adult higher education settings is not only the issue of what "multicultural" means, but how best to incorporate such issues into the curriculum. This debate centers in part on epistemological questions (Lather, 1991; Minnich, 1990). Should one accept the epistemological grounding that has traditionally been operative in higher education and simply add readings about diverse cultural groups and women, or should one develop courses based on a different epistemological grounding as many African-American Studies and Women's Studies Programs have done? No matter what epistemological position one takes, an inclusion of these issues in the curriculum is likely to affect the dynamics in the classroom, an issue which has not been addressed in the literature. This study is an attempt to begin to fill that lack.

### METHODOLOGY

This study was informed by a phenomenological theoretical framework which is concerned with understanding the meaning of events to ordinary people in specific situations. In this particular study, we were concerned with how faculty members perceived gender and multicultural equity issues, how they attempted to include these issues in the classroom, and their view on how an inclusion of such issues affected the classroom dynamics. The predominant means of data collection were audio-taped semi-structured interviews approximately one and a half hours in length with 16 instructors at a large southern university. Instructors were chosen who were experienced in classroom teaching, who were

known to include gender or multicultural issues in their classes, and who taught both traditional and nontraditional-age students.

There were eight women and eight men who participated in the study. Six participants were African-American; one was black African. The rest of the participants were white, although one of the nine white participants was International. One was an "out" lesbian, one identified as "bi-sexual", and two identified themselves as Jewish. There were six full professors, two associate professors, five assistant professors, and three part time faculty represented in the sample. Eight out of the 16 instructors teach at least one class that obviously, either by the title of the course or by the course content listed on the syllabus, give gender and/or multicultural issues either total or primary consideration in the course. The rest of the instructors included these issues in their classes to some extent, though it was not obvious by either the title of the class or the syllabus. Faculty members from the following disciplines were interviewed: African-American studies, chemistry, comparative literature, education, family studies, English, history, legal studies in business, psychology, sociology, speech communication, and women's studies. Data were analyzed according to the constant comparative method.

### FINDINGS

Findings of the study show that, in general, faculty had differing impressions about, commitment level to, and some variation in strategies for including gender and multicultural issues and managing the classroom dynamics that emerged in their classes. This is due in part to the fact that the sample included two groups of faculty members: (1) those who deal with gender and multicultural issues very directly and teach courses where the entire course content is about these issues (such as African-American Studies or women's studies classes); and (2) those who deal with these issues less directly--those who attempt to include such issues to some degree in their classes while dealing with broader content issues (such as survey classes in psychology or history, or classes such as chemistry where the course content doesn't easily lend itself to discussion of these issues). Thus for purposes of organizing the discussion, a comparison of the two groups of faculty members will take place in the context of a discussion of each of the four categories of findings.

#### Implicit Faculty Definitions of Multiculturalism

Participants were not asked specifically how they defined terms such as "multicultural," "diversity," or "multicultural education." Rather, they were asked how they include gender or multicultural course content in their classes and its effects on the classroom dynamics. Yet the participants had a working definition of what they believed these terms to mean based on the issues they talked about. Virtually all of them talked in some way about the importance of educating in a way that increases students' critical thinking skills and helps them to develop a broader, more inclusive perspective. As one female professor of legal studies put it, "the whole job is try to get them to be more critical thinkers and to be more inclusive and more expansive in their thinking." Another white male education professor, in describing positive experiences of dealing with these issues both in the classroom and in his personal life said, "I think to me the metaphor is you learn to see things that you never saw before...and I think when it goes well it is a real partnership."

While all the participants talked in some way or another about the importance of helping students develop a more broadened perspective, there was a difference among faculty in the kind of issues they discussed when asked about gender and/or multicultural course content. Those who deal with these issues very directly tended to discuss a multitude of



issues, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, religion, and disability. Those who do this less directly tended to discuss the issue in more limited terms, and tended to focus primarily on race. Of the 16 interviewed in the study, all discussed race and ethnicity at some length. About 2/3 discussed gender as well. All mentioned age, cross-cultural and international issues but only in passing, although two spent a bit more time on international issues. Approximately half interviewed discussed religion but mostly from the standpoint of how to deal with religious fundamentalism in the classroom. Eight mentioned sexual orientation issues but only three discussed it from the standpoint of its effect on the classroom. Economic class issues were mentioned only by three, and disability issues by two.

### **The Politics of the Higher Education System**

All institutions, including institutions of higher education are political. All the participants indicated an awareness of this, some more explicitly than others, when explaining how they included an exploration of multicultural issues in their classes. There was a marked difference between the two groups of faculty members in how they did or did not discuss the political nature of the university curriculum. Those dealing with these issues very directly spent more time discussing their personal philosophy of education, and epistemological issues related both to the university curriculum in general and to dealing with multicultural concerns. When asked what some primary issues are in dealing with multicultural concerns, one black male professor said "Are you willing to change the [epistemological] ground? ...I think the question always becomes whether you are asking a different kind of question than you were before, or whether you just changed the text and asked the same question." He went on to note that while there is a political position to everything, positions of the dominant culture are often made to appear apolitical. "The greatest power of the canon is that it makes its political statement in silence," he noted. While this instructor was calling attention to the political nature of what appears apolitical, others called attention to the related issue of objectivity. One female sociology and women's studies professor questioned the notion of an apolitical curriculum or the existence of an "objective" one. "You are talking about a "value free" objectivity of sociology, but even that is socially constructed, and who are the people who determine what objectivity is?" Virtually all of those dealing very directly with gender or multicultural concerns pointed to the political, epistemological, and theoretical grounding issues as part of designing an inclusive curriculum. Most also alluded to the potential personal dangers of doing this too directly if one wants to survive in the current system. Several made comments similar to the following comment made by a female professor: "I would suggest that anyone coming in who's got to earn tenure and promotion would have to be very careful doing this."

Those instructors dealing with these issues less directly, did not directly allude to the politics of the higher education system. Their position seemed essentially to be to accept the system the way it is; that is, not question the epistemological grounding of the curricular structure of the higher education system, but to try to deal with some multicultural issues by fitting in to the current system. Even among those instructors who felt strongly about the importance of raising multicultural awareness, the onus of set syllabi and time factors (especially in the larger, more basic courses), faculty were committed to relegating consciousness-raising experiences to side issues. Yet, even in such classes as the pure sciences, multicultural issues might be raised, though the instructors in these cases used subtle methods, such as out-of-class reading assignments, even discussions stimulated during break times to introduce students to such matters as gender equity, neglected minority

figures, and the problem of stereotypes. In those classes that were "borderline" (not specifically created as diversity issues classes) the most common method of introducing diversity material was through adjustment of the class content. Such classes as Comparative Literature's Modern World Literature introduced writers outside the usual canon of male-dominated western European literature. In sum, instructors dealing with these issues in this less direct manner tended to find ways they could include some multicultural content without questioning the overall design of university curricula.

#### **General Strategies for Managing the Multicultural Class Environment**

All instructors talked about issues related to how to deal with the classroom environment when dealing with multicultural concerns. Virtually all of them discussed the fact that it is difficult to create an environment in which students will honestly discuss these issues. One male instructor attributed this reluctance in part to an emphasis in this particular geographical area on southern gentility which he says "proposes automatically that you cannot say certain things about race, gender, or class. Why? It would make us uncomfortable...[but] what is the price that we pay for civility?" Most instructors agreed that students were in fact generally reticent about talking about these issues in classes. Both those who deal very directly and those dealing less directly reported that while there was variation in the amount of participation among individual students or student groups, minority students and traditional-age women tended to be quieter in classes, where males and nontraditional-age women tend to be more vocal. One even said of his traditional-age women students "the majority of my students are in favor of sexism," while another reported they have "very little appreciation for the ways in which schools sort girls and boys into professions, occupations, classrooms." Some thought that minority student participation may be linked to numbers (those groups fewer in number tended to speak out or question less than those groups with larger representations). White instructors reported students tended to be less guarded in discussions about race when there were no minority students in the class.

In spite of the fact that most instructors generally found students to be somewhat reticent to discuss these issues, all had suggestions for the development of effective teaching strategies. First was the use of humor. The most effective use of humor was turning the risibility back on the instructor, particularly to note instances when the instructor made humorous, embarrassing mistakes in dealing with situations involving diversity through lack of cultural understanding. Several instructors also reported successful "bonding" with their students to the point that a teasing relationship was comfortable. Secondly, instructors offered contradictory opinions about eliciting participation from members of their classes. Some instructors pointedly called on students to insure that every student was given an opportunity to speak his or her opinions. One instructor kept account to be sure every student in the class was called on at least once each week. Other instructors evinced strong considerations of students' right to be silent. As one instructor commented, "A student doesn't have to talk to participate." Another key both to providing a safe classroom environment and to stimulating discussion of controversial issues was insisting on an open-ended discussion. Most declared that discussions were purposed to "bring issues out into the open," not to settle questions or determine definitive answers. Some instructors played "devil's advocate" so that opposing points of view could readily be demonstrated. One black instructor noted, "I try to make them look at reasons over and above their reasons ....even if the whole class goes one way I take the opposite side just to make them question the issues." Most instructors actively took the role of moderator to provide a control as well as to sustain

the discussion and to hold it to its educational function. While only a few instructors admitted to serious fears about multicultural discussions in the classroom, most pointed out the tendency of students to monitor themselves in controversial discussions, erring more in smoothing over controversy than in disagreeing with one another.

#### **Dealing With Insider/Outsider (majority/minority) Status Issues**

Clearly, the race, class, gender, age, ability/disability, sexual orientation, etc. of the classroom participants, both of the students and of the instructor, are factors that affect classroom dynamics in all situations. But such demographic factors become even more significant when the entire course is about the nature of structural privilege and oppression. Thus, those instructors who deal very directly with these issues brought up additional concerns beyond those discussed above. Most of these concerns can be discussed within the frame of what one instructor (citing Collins, 1991) referred to as "insider/outsider" status issues. Insider/outsider status refers to the fact that at times one's race (or gender, or sexual orientation) may give one "inside" status with a group, while they may have "outsider" status with the same group in other regards.

Many instructors discussed insider/outsider status issues both in regard to their students and in regard to themselves. While it is true that students generally come into classes identified by title as being primarily or exclusively about gender or multicultural issues with a greater awareness of and concern about these issues, some still find the experience rather unsettling. One female professor noted that most white heterosexual students aren't used to having outsider status. She notes "It is that having to step in someone else's shoes or being even forced to consider the world from a different perspective is so unsettling for these students, though people who are different like people of color, women, people with disabilities, people who are different in any sort of way, are forced to do that daily, but students who have the privilege of being white, male, monied or whatever, find it almost traumatizing to have to see the world from an even slightly different perspective...extreme homophobia, extreme. Even in my graduate students." Both black and white instructors discussed the fact that very often white students from the South are also not used to having outsider status in regards to their religion, and went onto discuss how they deal with religious fundamentalism in their classroom. One white male instructor reported explaining to his class "that I didn't expect them to agree with me but that I did expect them to be open minded and that if they had frames that didn't allow them to even consider this, then they should go to Bob Jones University. That worked."

Both black and white professors reported that minority student participation was minimal at least on the undergraduate level, although many said that African-American students at the doctoral level tended to be quite vocal. Black professors were asked how they thought their common racial identity affected the participation of black students. A black African female professor referred to the fact that while she had insider status with the black community by virtue of her race, she had outsider status by virtue of being African and not African-American. A black male professor in his mid-40s referred to the fact that he feels that his black students are not more participatory than in classes with a white professor because of his age. While he has inside status because of his race, with traditional-age undergraduates he has outside status because of his age. Some of the black faculty reported (when asked) feeling that they had to work harder than their white colleagues to be taken seriously in the classroom. One woman said "I think they start from a position of negative. It is like you are guilty until proven innocent... And then when I get to the end they see me

at the level of average." Another female faculty member reported receiving poor evaluations, particularly from her undergraduates. Most of the black faculty acknowledged that this was the first time the majority of students had a class with a black instructor, and attributed some of their students' attitudes to their own outsider status as black instructors.

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

While findings of this study are limited to faculty perceptions and have to be interpreted with caution, some tentative conclusions can be reached in regards to both the definition of multicultural concerns and how instructors perceive the effects of the inclusion of these issues in the classroom. First, the epistemological grounding of the instructors, along with the subject area and the courses they teach, clearly affects not only how instructors approach these issues, but also how they define what "multicultural" means. While all the participants indicated the term at least includes race, those dealing very directly had a broader definition, and seemed to understand "multicultural" to mean any group that has been given marginal status in society and in the academy. Most in this group spent time discussing issues that Minnich (1990) discusses, such as who has the power to create knowledge, determine what counts as knowledge, and who determines what "objective" is. By contrast, those dealing less directly seemed to accept the higher education definitions of what knowledge is and how it's created; they focused more on ways of including multicultural issues while also having pressure to include what is "traditionally" covered in their courses. Rather than ignoring distinctions of race, gender, and so on, instructors in this group tended to think in terms of individual behaviors and how these were linked to success in learning. Second, it appears that those who deal very directly with these issues in their classes, not only encounter greater awareness levels and interest in dealing with this issues, they also encounter more conflict and resistance. This may due in part to the fact that dominant culture students are used to having insider status in nearly all situations; they are not used to being in marginalized positions and such an experience is unsettling for some.

While the study is limited to the instructors' perceptions, it does suggest a number of faculty across the curriculum are still very much concerned about diversity in the classroom and its place in the academic curriculum, although they may have differing epistemological viewpoints on how best to include these issues in their classes. But knowledge of the effects of the inclusion of these issues on the classroom dynamics and the creation of an environment conducive to exploring these issues are central to the design of curriculum transformation projects based on a multitude of epistemological positions. This study offers a contribution to the development of that knowledge base.

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## **The Making of a WASP: Promises and Realities of a Nontraditional Role**

**Kimberly A. Townsend**

### **Abstract**

From 1942-1944 a controversial training program prepared women "to fly the Army way." But more than the development of cockpit skills is revealed through the voices of the women themselves who tell stories of personal development and a unique culture of women.

### **Introduction**

In 1942 as the conflict of World War II increased, the United States military initiated one of its most controversial experiments: a program to train women to fly for the Army Air Forces. Of the 25,000 applicants, only 1,074 would graduate with the title Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP). This research reveals an untold history of the education and training of women pilots from 1942-1944. The purpose of this research is to explore the process of adult education in preparing women to work in the armed services, the epitome of a male-dominated organization. The research examines the nontraditional role of the WASPs, not only in regard to what was expected of them, but also by what they anticipated, and the reality of what occurred. Historical methodology was used to locate, examine, and interpret documented sources such as congressional legislation, military records, curriculum and training guides, policy statements, letters, diaries, and original newspapers written by the trainees. In addition, 22 oral history interviews add new depth and understanding to the research by exploring the impact of adult education on the lives of these women and its lifelong influence on their personal development. The women bring to life their experiences of learning, working, and developing a sense of community as they shared a unique form of adult education with other women who held the same goals of contribution and service to their country.

### **The Experiment**

The program is under constant surveillance since it is the only school in the world completely devoted to the training of women pilots in advanced military training.

The Avenger May 11, 1943

General Henry "Hap" Arnold, commander of the Army Air Forces stood before the last graduating class of women pilots. "I didn't know in 1941 whether a slip of a young girl could fight the controls of a B-17 in the heavy weather. Those of us who had been flying for twenty or thirty years knew that flying an airplane was something you do not learn overnight."<sup>1</sup> But the women had not learned to fly overnight. It took them over six months of intensive training to certify them to fly army aircraft. From the inception of the WASP program by the famous woman pilot, Jacqueline Cochran to its deactivation amidst complaints from male pilot organizations, the program was an experiment. Although its primary goal was to enable women to release male pilots for combat duty, the implications of the program were far reaching. What began with a replication of the curriculum of male

cadet pilots program would evolve into a series of adjustments which balanced the needs of the service with the overarching factor of what it meant to be a woman pilot. There were battles of prejudice which ran the gamut from the belief about what a woman's role should be to the argument that women were physically incapable of flying during their monthly cycle. One by one the myths were dispelled as 1074 women successfully completed a rigorous training program.

Their mission was simple: release male pilots for combat. The results were impressive. The program lasted only two years. But in that time, WASPs flew over 60 million miles in 78 different types of military aircraft. They ferried aircraft from the manufacturer to points of debarkation for overseas and operational squadrons. They flew war weary aircraft to repair depots, at times barely making the landings due to faulty equipment. They instructed male pilots and flew military aircraft on navigational training flights. The WASPs performed routine testing of military aircraft, flew administrative missions, towed targets for live gunnery practice and flew every type of mission except combat. Despite efforts to give the WASPs military status, Congress disapproved the legislation and the program was deactivated on December 20, 1944. The WASPs were given no recognition and no veteran's benefits. Thirty-eight women had died in service to their country but there were no American flags on their coffins and no Gold Stars to be hung in the windows of their families.<sup>2</sup>

The reason the WASP program was considered to be an experiment was simple: these were not just pilots, they were women pilots. Opponents of the program insisted that women were physically, emotionally, and even mentally incapable of meeting the demands of flying let alone flying military aircraft. Even a WASP supporter, Dr. Nels Monsrud, physician for the WASPs noted "When one considers the overall feminine capacity to broad emotional trend, the tendency to cry as easily in anger as for any other reason, much care must be exercised lest the state is misinterpreted." As part of the experimental nature of the program, Dr. Monsrud ordered the reporting of information about the women's menstrual cycles and although embarrassing to some of the trainees, "many of whom had never spoken with anyone about such intimate details, Dr. Monsrud was collecting data that would lead to findings that were for the era, revolutionary."<sup>3</sup>

Cochran had walked a fine line between publicizing the accomplishments of the WASPs while maintaining the secrecy of the experiment. From magazines such as Look to newsreels and newspapers, the WASPs were making headlines. Life had an unsolicited 8-page article. Newsweek, Reader's Digest, news reels, and Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians followed suit. It was hoped that "publicity would keep the recruits bright-eyed and eager to come to Avenger's gates." But those who opposed the program, including several organizations of male pilots, swayed public opinion, resulting in the program being called everything from a blunder to a fast play to a racket." The final history of the WASP program summed up the problem: "Few programs have equaled it in interest, controversy, and glamour. The WASPs were novelties. War and Army flying in particular had been looked upon as a man's game."<sup>4</sup>

Cochran watched as class W-44-10 crowded on the stage, each woman with silver wings now safely in her possession. They sang their class song. As she listened to "The Last Sad Sacks of Avenger Field" she knew that the experiment had been a success, not just for now but for the women pilots of the future. But there was no doubt in her mind that in those early days of planning and politicking, the program to train women pilots was an experiment—one that was expected to fail.<sup>5</sup>

## The Program

This is different from any education I had ever had. There was the discipline, and living together with my classmates, and of course I was never so motivated in my life. The training made an impact on my life.

This kind of experience I couldn't have had anywhere else.

-Women Airforce Service Pilot, May 1993

Plans for the training of women pilots combined the curriculum of the male cadet pilots program, the rigors of Army discipline, and the special needs of the women. Such an undertaking had never before been attempted. The path, therefore was new and there were no guidelines to follow. The scope of the training included (1) academic instruction in technical objects; (2) instruction in the fundamental principles required to pilot training type Army aircraft; (3) training in accepted procedures of the Air Transport Command; and (4) physical training designed to maintain and improve physical and mental alertness.<sup>6</sup>

The women came to the training program having already completed a civilian pilot training course. But to fly the complicated army planes required special skills. The women had to learn to fly by instruments in case of bad weather or night flying. They had to fly cross-country flights since many of them would be flying ferrying missions, and they had to understand how to recover the aircraft when problems occurred. Learning appropriate maneuvers could be risky. One check pilot tells of losing "his girl" as she fell out of the cockpit during a spin. The trainee had landed safely after parachuting, despite losing her shoes and scratching her face. The instructor "gathered her up, took her to another PT-19 and made her fly it for half an hour so that she would not be spooked by the bizarre incident." The woman pilot was now an official member of the Caterpillar Club, the prestigious group who had safely bailed out of an airplane.<sup>7</sup>

Evaluations, called checkrides created the dreaded disease among trainees known as "checkitis". If a trainee failed the checkride she was given a pink slip with a "U" as a warning. She was allowed to retest a few days later but if she failed the second time she was washed out of the program. Despite a cavalier attitude among the women, washouts were greatly felt by fellow classmates. "I mean you came in and the bed was stripped, the mattress rolled up, and somebody else had hit the dust." One instructor observed, "I noticed that whenever a girl was washed out it had an effect on the whole group. This was lots more noticeable with girls than boys. Most of them were more than ever determined to get through and they were a lot more tense than the average Army cadet." Washing out was dreaded "almost more than death, which seldom figured in their vigorous, youthful, well-occupied minds. To wash out meant they had lost the biggest opportunity of their young lives to do something of importance and to be part of something special."<sup>8</sup>

The schedule was hectic and the women were often exhausted by the end of the day. The women of the ninth class of 1944 satirically recorded a typical day in their class book:

0600: Reveille (Five Minutes! Fall Out! Tenshun! Forw'd March!)

0615: Mess (Bolt cold eggs-No time to let your coffee cool-let it burn! Gotta make my bed. Gotta sweep the floor. You have three minutes before falling out)

0700: Link (Airspeed, altimeter, needle and ball, beams, headings, stay awake! The instructor's cryin' again-everything's off!)

0800: PT (Five minutes to run from link, change gym clothes. Meet formation. The Sergeant: Extend to the right, extend to the left, bend, stretch, jump, groan, rest. Jog around the gym three times, Dismissed)

0900: Ground School (Five minutes to bathe and dress, lectures, notes, engines, weather, navigation, instruments. Now this gyro reacts higher, higher, and higher)

1200: Mess (Hurry, let's eat, it's so long since breakfast)

1315: flight line (Fall out! Don't forget your helmet, goggles, indelible pencil, adhesive tape, knee boards, maps, logs, PIF, plotter, computer - confuser. Sleeves up or down, must be uniform. Off we go into the wild blue yonder)

2000: Mess (Drag it out W-9. Five minutes to get that zoot suit off, auxiliary field dirt washed off, and meet mess formation. Hurry, the schedule says)

2030: Link-code meeting!

2200: Taps!<sup>9</sup>

### Cochran's Convent

The commanding officer said: "Look on each side of you. Only one of the three of you will graduate." I remember feeling sorry for those other two girls. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't make it.

-Women Airforce Service Pilot, November 1993

Cochran had definite standards she wanted maintained. She knew that any controversy could undermine the purpose of the program. The enforcement of standards and the strict rules regarding personal relationships led to the designation of the training program as Cochran's Convent. A listing of establishments was posted on the day-room bulletin board "declaring off-limits any hotel (except the lobby and coffee shop), airport tavern, and the Rock Inn." Any woman who could not meet the standards would be eliminated, regardless of her flying ability. The standards of the "detachment can be no better or worse than that of the individuals attached to it. Upon them rests the responsibility for the prompt, cheerful, obedience to such order as shall from time to time be issued." The most reiterated rule involved the student-instructor relationship. Trainees were directed to devote their time to successfully completing the program and not to get side tracked by personal relationships. An occasional chat was inevitable but dating was definitely taboo. The message was clear: Women pilot trainees will not have "social engagement, however casual with military personnel or civilian instructors assigned to this station. This applies both on and off the post at all times." <sup>10</sup>

A demerit system was established to maintain discipline and teach women the significance of following the rules. A sharp military image of the WASP was important to prove that they could make it in the Army. Lt. LaRue, one of the officials in charge of military discipline noted "WASPs are continually being looked over with a critical eye to see if women can meet the standards that the Army Air Corps has set for their cadets and officers." However, unlike the system for male cadets in which they could "walk off" their offenses, a sufficient number of demerits could "eliminate a trainee just as easily as failure to make satisfactory progress in the course." The student regulations referred to demerits not as punishments but "marks of conduct which were awarded by the supervisor for violations of the regulations with the number determined according to the offense." <sup>11</sup>

Physical training became a cornerstone of the WASP program. The exercises were systematic and progressive, designed to develop strength, coordination, agility, and skill. They included calisthenics and athletic games that "developed confidence and spirit." The women were frequently told that the training would "make a man out of them"—a consequence that did not particularly please them. The physical trainers were demanding. From the early days of Lt. Fleishman barking directives from a table top to Lt. LaRue's famous "okay, pull 'em up, ladies", a discrete directive following side-straddle hops, physical training was a serious matter. <sup>12</sup>

The use of songs was initiated with the first class of WASPs as the women used them to keep in step while marching in formation. "I marched with the new girls to the school building and classroom. I was startled that first day to hear them start singing,



keeping time with their steps as if they rejoiced at the top of their lungs." The evolution of the program was typified by the songs which became more involved and more descriptive of the training experiences. One song in particular, "Zoot Suits and Parachutes" was rumored to be hated by Cochran. Its refrain of "If you have a daughter teach her how to fly, But if you have a son, throw the bastard in the sky", did not seem to give the proper perspective of the lady-like image of the WASPs that Cochran wanted. Along with a repertoire of tunes, the WASP trainees sang in their bays, in the cattle cars that took them to the air fields, and in the mess halls. The program may have been "army", but the women made it their own with fun, a sense of sisterhood, and a courageous attitude.<sup>13</sup>

WASP Jean Cole says this about the experience: "My daughter Sally asked me 'How can people go from living on the edge to cooking and sewing, without feeling mad or depressed? Some of the women seemed to think of the whole experience as almost illicit-off limits to them but, because of the war, temporarily opened up to them (saying We were lucky) as though they had no legitimate right to fly! It was a big joy ride. The keys were right there in the Porsche, and they took it for the spin of their lives, but of course it was only to be expected that they'd get caught and sent back to station wagon.'<sup>14</sup> But not before they had the experience of a lifetime.

### Conclusion

I never regretted my decision to become a WASP.  
It literally changed my entire life.

-Women Airforce Service Pilot, October 1993

What does it take to be a woman pilot? The WASPs themselves describe the qualities of courage, risk taking, independence, a sense of humor, determination, independence and a little arrogance. There was also a great sense of patriotism, "a calling, and a pride to keep going." Some would say they walked into the WASP program fully prepared to succeed. But others clearly felt that although they may have had certain characteristics that made them good flyers, their time as a WASP developed a self-confidence that could be found in no other environment. "After I got through that training, I felt there was nothing I couldn't do."<sup>15</sup>

Fifty years after the deactivation of the program, the WASP organization is a well-organized system of communication and education. The members pay dues, participate in regional and national conferences, and receive a newsletter which is both professional and informative. Their conferences are times for reunion and learning as they attend lectures, invite speakers, and tour facilities. These women are lifelong learners and their love of flying not only forms the bond between them but continues to peak their interest and enthusiasm.

The impact of this experience on these women in long range. "We never had experienced anything like it before. We had the times of our lives." What they learned about themselves and others could not be found in a textbook or evolve from a simple classroom exchange. It was a different world; one of challenge, excitement, and frustration. "For me it was a life experience. I had never had a learning experience to match it and never would again."<sup>16</sup> The women did not realize it at the time but they had made history and set a precedent for women. They were young and courageous and confident. They simply wanted to fly. It was for many the best time in their lives and they would remain throughout their lives Women Airforce Service Pilots.

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- <sup>1</sup>Graduation speech by General H.H. Arnold to class 44-W-10, Avenger Field, Sweetwater, Texas (December 7, 1944). WASP Collection, L-2, Commands, Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.
- <sup>2</sup>J. Cochran, Director of Women Pilots, Final Report on Women Pilot's Program (Washington, D.C.: Army Air Forces, 1945), 1; Sally Van Wagenen Keil, Those Wonderful Women In Their Flying Machines (New York: Four Directions Press, 1990), 169.
- <sup>3</sup>N. Monsrud, Report of Air Surgeon's Office on WASP Personnel (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Army Air Forces, 1945), 7.
- <sup>4</sup>"Publicity for Avenger," The Avenger, 2 September 1943, 5; History of the WASP Program (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Army Air Forces, Central Flying Training Command, 20 January 1945).
- <sup>5</sup>Jacqueline Cochran, The Stars at Noon (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954).
- <sup>6</sup>Program of Instruction, Women's Flying Training (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Army Air Forces, 10 November 1942).
- <sup>7</sup>Keil, Those Wonderful Women in Their Flying Machines, 167; Women Airforce Service Pilot, interviews by author, May 1993, Dayton, Ohio; November 1993, Dallas, TX.
- <sup>8</sup>Women Airforce Service Pilot, interview by author, August 1993, Connellsville, PA; Keil, Those Wonderful Women in Their Flying Machines, 166; History of the WASP Program, 74.
- <sup>9</sup>Class Book 44-W-9, 2563rd AAF.
- <sup>10</sup>Leona Deaton, Rules and Regulations for WASPs (Sweetwater, TX), 1; Leona Deaton, Duties of Student Officers (Houston, TX, Headquarters 319th AAF Flying Training Detachment, 1943), 3.
- <sup>11</sup>"Bad Formations Show Lack of Discipline" The Avenger, 3 December 1943, 5; A Handbook for Student Pilot Trainees (Washington, D.C.; Headquarters Army Air Forces, 1943), 10; L.E. McConnell, Women Pilot Trainee Regulations (Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment, February 1943), 9.
- <sup>12</sup>Women Airforce Service Pilots, interviews by author, October 1992, Dayton, OH; November 1993, San Antonio, TX; Jean Hascall Cole, Women Pilots of World War II (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 25.
- <sup>13</sup>Women Airforce Service Pilots, interviews by author, November 1993, San Antonio, TX; November 1993, Dallas, TX; December 1993, Greensburg, PA.
- <sup>14</sup>Cole, Women Pilots of World War II, 155.
- <sup>15</sup>Women Airforce Service Pilots, interviews by author, November 1993, San Antonio, TX; November 1993, Dallas, TX; December 1993; WASP surveys.
- <sup>16</sup>Women Airforce Service Pilot, interview by author, Dallas, TX, November 1993.

## Beyond the Vessel: Fostering Adoption of Innovation and Change in Adult Education Practice

Michael K. Turner and John M. Dirkx

**Abstract:** Recent studies suggest that continuing professional education (CPE) programs utilizing traditional "update" models are relatively ineffective in facilitating actual change in practice. This study investigated the efficacy of a "commitment to change" (CTC) strategy as a means of fostering intended change in the practice of adult educators.

Continuing professional education, staff development, and inservice education programs, continue to be a priority issue for adult educators concerned with the quality of education received by learners across settings. Given the responsibilities of providing such continuing education and the rapid changes in knowledge and social conditions of the time, creating environments that enable adult educators to be continuously supported in efforts of professional development seems like an obvious and natural thing to do. Yet, the creation of educational programs that will achieve this is an extremely difficult undertaking. A variety of "models" have been developed to facilitate staff development for educators, but most are characterized primarily by "update" designs. Such traditional models evolve from empirical-rational change strategies (Chin and Benne, 1985). This empirical-rational view of change largely ignores the importance of participants' prior beliefs, values, and attitudes in the process of adopting innovations or changes in their practice. Consequently, staff development often results in new knowledge gains but little actual change in practice.

Three related theoretical traditions provide a basis for understanding and bridging this gap - diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1983), normative re-education strategies (Chin and Benne, 1985), and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1982). According to Rogers (1971), adoption is a decision to make full use of a new idea as the best course of action. Keys to the adoption process include making adoption decisions early, choosing innovations that are important, and choosing innovations that are feasible. Change in a pattern of practice will only occur, however, as participants involved are brought to change their normative orientations and develop commitments to new ones (Chin & Benne, 1985), including "change in attitudes, values, skills, and significant relationships, not just changes in knowledge, information, or intellectual rationales for action and practice" (p. 23). The likelihood of change being adopted in one's practice is also a function of one's sense of self-efficacy or the conviction that one has the capabilities and resources necessary to successfully implement the change (Bandura, 1982). For example, if educators experience low self-efficacy around an idea, method or strategy they are learning, it is unlikely they will attempt to make practice changes in these areas or, if change is attempted, they will be frustrated by barriers or obstacles to implementing the change.

This study also incorporated elements into the change strategy from previous research on fostering change in educational practice. A process used by Devlin-Scherer, Devlin-Scherer, Schaffer, and Stringfield (1983) for developing commitment encouraged classroom teachers to: a) discuss change in relation to practice; b) discuss success or nonsuccess in implementation of change; and c) respond to commitment by adopting change, questioning

the value of commitment, or ignoring commitment. Key aspects of this study were the public discussion of and declaration of change in the group setting, which seemed to serve as a natural support group for those who encounter difficulties making identified changes. Purkis (1982) focused on the use of follow-up of continuing education programs as a key to helping practitioners make identified changes in practice. Program participants were asked to be specific in describing the kinds of changes they intended to make and to limit the number of commitments so identified changes would be feasible for implementation. Aggressive and continued written follow-up allowed participants to discuss their changes in a dialogistic manner.

## METHODS

Based on the theoretical traditions and prior research studies described above, we designed a commitment to change (CTC) process that included the following steps: a) discussion of participants' beliefs and values about and attitudes toward their own practices and how adopting new innovations may impact their practices; b) brief explanation of the CTC process, with an emphasis on the importance of identifying early desirable changes related to the training content that were specific, important, and feasible; c) provision of a public declaration of intended changes at the end of each session, in which participants share changes with each other, first in small groups and then later in the larger group; d) submission in writing at the conclusion of the training session of identified changes; and e) written follow-up at one, three, and 12 months, requesting level of progress in implementation, perceived effects of implementation, and barriers or obstacles, if any, to full implementation. Follow-up training sessions were used to discuss implementation of changes identified from the previous training session.

The CTC strategy was part of a state-wide, residential, teacher training institute implemented for paid and volunteer instructors in adult basic education (ABE). The institute consisted of two sessions of three days each, approximately five months apart. Attendance varied from 52 to Session One to 44 for Session Two. Participants varied considerably in age and years of ABE experience. The vast majority of participants were women. Participants ranged in years of experience from none to twenty-four years, with an average of 4.9 years. At the end of each three-day training session, participants were asked to identify and submit in writing two to three changes in practice they intended to make as a result of their participation in the institute. To be included, the intended changes had to be a) specific and capable of being implemented over a period of time, b) important to the participants, and c) capable of being implemented within the participants' practice sites. For each session, a one-month, written follow-up provided confirmation of the identified changes. At three months following each session, participants were asked to respond to a questionnaire concerning the extent of change implemented, level of satisfaction with changes in practice, importance of changes made, barriers to change encountered, and effects of changes on their practices. Similar follow-up was conducted at nine and 15 months for Session One and at 10 months for Session Two.

The level of implementation of each intended change identified was scored on a nominal scale (1 = 0-25%, 2 = 26-50%, 3 = 51-75%, 4 = 76-100%, and 5 = No response). Level of satisfaction with implementation of intended change was measured using a Likert scale (1 =



very satisfied to 4= dissatisfied, with 5= no response on level of satisfaction). Participants were also asked to respond to open-ended questions regarding barriers to change and effects of changes on practices. Response rates varied from 36.3% for 11 month follow-up to 59.6% for three-month follow-up for Session One. The average response rate for all six follow-up periods was 44.2% A return rate of 67% was obtained. Descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis were used to analyze the data. Information from the first session was then shared with all participants at a subsequent training session. Discussion focused specifically on factors which either facilitated or impeded the change process and on the nature of change itself.

## FINDINGS

Levels of implementation and perceived satisfaction. Overall, participants indicated relatively high levels of success regarding the extent of change and very high levels of satisfaction with changes in practice as a result of using the CTC strategy. Every participant reported implementing at least one change and only two respondents indicated any level of dissatisfaction with implementation of intended changes. The levels or degrees of implementation of intended changes for Sessions One are reported in Tables 1 and 2. For Session One, the average levels of perceived satisfaction with changes made were: a) at three months, 1.8; b) at seven months, 1.8, and c) 16 months, 1.9. For Session Two, the average levels of perceived satisfaction with changes made were: a) at three months, 1.6, and b) at 11 months, 2.0. Sixteen months after the first session, 85.2% of the participants still identified their intended changes as important.

Nature of changes identified. Qualitative analysis of the nature of the intended changes identified reflected changes related to content or pedagogy. Content changes indicated participants were incorporating new content into their practices. For example, many intended changes focused on some aspect of learning disabilities. Although this content was new to most participants, they felt it important to include it in their practice. Changes involving pedagogy were largely an identification of new strategies for teaching math and reading. Participant comments regarding the effects of the CTC strategy on their practices, their students, or themselves were also analyzed. Of the total effects identified, 91% were positive. Many participants felt changes they had initiated helped students understand their own learning styles and process better. For example, one participant wrote, "Students feel more involved in their own learning. Some have become more confident since realizing that their own experiences are valuable to and applicable to their education." Another commented, "My students are learning that there are different ways to learn things. They understand that their uniqueness is an asset." Other comments reflected on the impact the CTC strategy had on participants' practices, and on the skills and effort required to improve it. One teacher wrote, "I think the Institute has made a great impact on my awareness and has unlocked some creative thinking skills in me and has given me ideas." Another teacher indicated how the process had effected those with whom she works, "I think my participation in the ABE Institute has made other instructors more aware of their teaching and need for new approaches and techniques to better meet student need."

Only six comments revealed any kind of negative reaction to changes implemented, indicating a negative impact on the instructor's use of time or negative effects on institutional

policy and procedures. Barriers to implementing the intended changes identified in the training sessions revolved around seven key issues: a) unstable student population, b) lack of opportunity to implement specific goal, c) lack of time, d) difficulty initiating change, e) changes in duties and responsibilities, f) lack of resources, and g) bureaucratic problems. Concerns over time required to make the intended changes comprised the largest percentage (37%) of these responses.

Table 1.  
Reported level of implementation of change following  
Session One training

| <u>Percent of<br/>Implementation</u> | <u>Percent of participants reporting change<br/>at three, seven, and 16 month follow-up</u> |              |                |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
|                                      | <u>Three</u>                                                                                | <u>Seven</u> | <u>Sixteen</u> |
| 0 - 25                               | 9.7                                                                                         | 12.7         | 20.5           |
| 26 - 50                              | 19.3                                                                                        | 21.8         | 15.4           |
| 51 - 75                              | 45.2                                                                                        | 32.7         | 30.8           |
| 76 - 100                             | 16.1                                                                                        | 27.2         | 33.3           |
| No response                          | 9.7                                                                                         | 5.4          |                |

Table 2.  
Reported level of implementation of change following  
Session Two training

| <u>Percent of<br/>Implementation</u> | <u>Percent of participants reporting change<br/>at three and 11 month follow-up</u> |               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|                                      | <u>Three</u>                                                                        | <u>Eleven</u> |
| 0 - 25                               | 14.8                                                                                | 21.1          |
| 26 - 50                              | 24.1                                                                                | 13.5          |
| 51 - 75                              | 24.1                                                                                | 30.8          |
| 76 - 100                             | 37.0                                                                                | 34.6          |

Comments about time revealed four specific themes: a) administrative or organizational problems, b) lack of classroom support, c) lack of time to train volunteers/staff, and d) classroom management problems. The issue of time was succinctly reflected in one teacher's

comment: "The problem always seems to be time. We're always running out of it and there's so many things we get accomplished, but one always seems to get by-passed." Another teacher put it bluntly, reflecting broader professional issues of concern to the field: "Lack of time. Considerable personal time and expense had to be used."

## DISCUSSION

The data indicate that, over time, almost two-thirds of the participants reported high levels of implementation of intended changes identified in the training sessions. Our findings also indicate that the reflective process used in this study developed awareness among participants of the change process itself and fostered reflection on practice. Open-ended comments about the effects of the changes on participants and their practices, and group discussions around the CTC strategy strongly suggest that the process helped teachers be more reflective about and sensitive to the complex nature of changing instructional practices. Apparent in these comments was a more acute sense of the role that they as individuals play in the process of change, and the influence on change of socio-cultural contexts, including relationships with fellow teachers and organizational factors seemingly beyond their control. The participants clearly perceived the CTC strategy as contributing to this developing awareness and to their ability to transfer new knowledge and skills into changes in practice.

The study also contributes to our theoretical understanding of adopting new ideas and instructional methods in adult education practice. Analysis of the reported levels of implementation over time indicates two broad patterns to implementation of intended changes. The percentage of participants reporting implementation levels of 76-100% and 0-25% increased over time, while those reporting 51-75% and 26-50% decreased. Those who experienced more than 50% success early continued to implement their changes. Those who experienced less than 50% success appeared to have more difficulty sustaining the changes within their practices and the degree of implementation fell over time. These findings support Roger's (1983) contention that early adopters are more likely to sustain change. To effect successful change, practitioners must be able to experience a fairly high level of success early in the adoption process. Perceived levels of satisfaction with implementation and the perceived importance of the changes made were quite high, indicating a personal sense of efficacy among the participants in accomplishing what they set out to do. The nature of the changes identified by participants in this study seems congruent with the notion of self-efficacy noted earlier; success of previous actions in a particular area or methodology will likely promote the ability to adopt new change and overcome related barriers.

Contextual barriers to implementing change are also clearly important to understanding the process of adopting innovations in practice. Despite the general success of this group with implementation, there clearly were a number of identified barriers that worked to make change difficult. It is important to note that many of the categories of barriers identified seem related to program or organizational support. Research on this (Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Cormier and Hagman, 1987) has clearly indicated that any transfer of training is difficult, if not impossible, without the support of the organizations of those attempting to make changes in practice. While follow-up procedures are one way of facilitating transfer, social, cultural, and organizational issues can seriously undermine even the most rigorous and sophisticated follow-up. Many of the barriers to change identified by the teachers in this

study suggest a need for trainers to spend time with program participants in carefully analyzing the contexts for which the change is intended. Participants need to think through the process of implementation in terms of needed resources, time required, and how social and organizational influences might affect implementation. This process should be incorporated into the CTC strategy.

Future research needs to focus on the decision-making process participants use to identify intended changes - what changes are selected and why. More baseline data on what might be considered reasonable levels of implementation within a certain time frame is also needed. In addition, research is needed to determine if early adopters better at coping with contextual barriers or if they simply encounter fewer in the change process. Finally, congruence between kinds of staff development, such as active and participatory learning activities (Silberman, 1990), and success in adoption should be pursued further.

The value of the CTC process in fostering adoption of change in ABE practice is reflected in the comments of one participant who wrote, "It helps to identify things you will do to make change and actually implement them. So often we have good intentions - ideas for new teaching techniques, but fail to put them into practice. These exercises requiring us to put commitments to change in writing have been helpful for this reason."

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White Collar Workers in the 50's:  
A Lack of Coverage and Responsibility by Adult Education

Paula Burk Uhler

Abstract: Adult Education (AE) was designed as a conduit of information from the AEA to their members in all areas of adult education and as a forum for debate and discussion concerning those issues. During its first decade of operation AE published articles chosen by its executive committee based on themes selected by the committee. Because the committee was void of direct representation with interests in corporations business and industry, AE was not the representative voice it could have been in the field of adult education in business and industry during the 1950s.

Adult Education (AE) made its official debut as a periodical in October of 1950. This was a direct result of the intended formation of the Adult Education Association (AEA) as a merger between the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) and the Adult Education Department of the National Education Association (NEA). Prior to this meeting the AAAE published the Adult Education Journal and the NEA published the Adult Education Bulletin as their respective house organs. The creation of AE was a logical first step towards the integration of these two national associations.

The decision to form the AEA was a consequence of a mutually mandated effort on behalf of both associations to address the needs of persons and institutions engaged in adult education work. Adult Education capsulized AEAs plan in "Toward a new Association" (1950, October). This same article introduced the previous formation of a Joint Committee (p. 1) made up of members from the "Bulletin" and the "Journal" whose primary function was to assist in the formation of the AEA. The committee described four goals necessary to successfully achieve this merger. The first goal was the "Continued publication of a professional journal and the development of the materials required in organizing the new association" (p. 3).

Adult Education defined itself as "One concrete illustration of the way in which the new organization may carry out its function" (p. 4). AE declared itself a "house organ" (p. 4) with the implication that AE would continue to carry out the former duties of the "Bulletin" and the "Journal" serving as a conduit of information for the AEA to its membership with regards to the new organization and as a forum of discussion and debate for their

membership concerning areas of acknowledged concerns like research, programs and policies in the field of adult education. In the same issue AE defined the membership of AEA as representative of two major factions: (a) "All persons who are engaged, professionally or non-professionally, in educational work designed to help adults" (p. 6) and (b) "...many who do not now think of themselves as adult educators. For example, persons carrying on educational work with adults in business, industrial, labor" (p. 6)

A close look at the 33 issues of AE published during its initial decade of publication, shows that one of the greatest areas of focus by AE went to programs involved with organized labor (OL). This focus stood in sharp contrast with the attention AE gave business and industry (BI) during this same time period. An examination of AE from its first issue (1950, October) until its last (1959, Autumn) reveal that there were a total of 17 articles excluding letters to the editor, book reviews and research reports, published with specific applications to program design, needs analysis and evaluation for OL. There were only six articles with the same exclusions that even mentioned the term B&I in their pages.

In 1950 and again in 1951 committees were established with the intent of orchestrating the establishment of the AEA. These members were also charged with choosing the selection of themes/symposiums for AE and were asked to contribute articles for each of the bi-monthly, (AE became quarterly after September, 1954) issues (1950, October) as well. An examination of the committee formed in 1951 reveal a total of 33 members whose members were working actively in the areas of education (27), government (5) and organized labor (1), (1951, February, pp. 115-116). There were no representatives of business and industry. The assigned duties of this committee had both positive and negative effects on readers of AE. They were positive because AE readers could benefit from the knowledge in research and operations of working professionals in their specialized areas of education. The repercussions were negative for AE readers because this process of selecting articles did nothing to encourage exploration of topics other than those already familiar to the AE Contributors.

It was this component of the AE editorial policy that may have created the disparity of coverage in AE between traditional white collar workers of business and industry (B&I) and blue collar workers in organized labor (OL).

One actor not related to this disparity of coverage was a lack of educational activity on the part of either B&I or the adult education community. Knowles (1977) contended in his book, A History of the Adult Education Movement in the United States that there were increased provisions by corporations for educational programs in B&I in the 1950s. He stated that these programs "broadened and deepened industrial education" (p.80), and were

significant developments for business and industry during this decade. Knowles asserted that industry provided "facilities designed exclusively for education" and during the 1950's presented a "closer cooperation with formal educational institutions" (pp. 81-82). Five years previously, in an article written for AE titled "Philosophical Issues that Confront Adult Educators" Knowles (1957, February) failed to give specific mention to educational programs in B&I. Informal Learning in the Workplace (Knowles, 1950) was reviewed in AE's premier edition by educator Benjamin Shangold (1950, October) who wrote, "Without doubt, it will be used widely as a text for the training of professional and lay leadership" (p. 36). Knowles's professionally recognized innovative concept of learning with a goal of self-improvement with on-the-job implications for all workers was never addressed in the pages of AE except for this review.

AE only published one article directly related to a programs specifically established for B&I. In the Spring, 1957 issue "Yardsticks for Human Relations Training" (1957, Spring) which focused on sensitivity training in the workplace. AE also published reviews and notices of dissertations, manuscripts and books pertaining to adult education recently published or in still being researched and book reviews featured respectively in AE's annual "Research Review" chapters and "Professional Literary Review" sections found at the conclusion of most issues from 1950 - 1959.

"The Research Review" section was begun by AE in 1955. A specific examination of this annual section reveals a total of 195 articles reviewed from 1955 until 1959: only five of them even mentioned the words business and industry. The first was "Leadership Behavior - What Executives Do" by Earl Brooks (1955, Winter). Brook's article examined what makes a superior manager compared to an inferior one. Specifically he examined "How do excellent executives spend their time different from below average ones" (p. 121). "The Assumed Similarity Scores for Managers and Boards of Directors of an Illinois Corporation" by Fiehler, Godfrey, Hall (1955, Winter) for publication in 1955 was a company-sponsored project which examined interpersonal relationships and patterns that existed in the business sector with regards to upper level management (p. 121). Hearn Gordon directed several students at the University of California at Berkeley in a thesis project which examined "Role Differentiation of Presidents and Boards of Directors Effectiveness" (1955, Winter). The study found that there was no relationship to the extent of role differentiation and board effectiveness but there was a positive correlation between role designation and effectiveness (p. 122).

An article by Dwight Morris and Paul Bergevin called "Adult Education for Business and Industry", (1956, Summer) examined the development of a plan of educational programming for business and industry personnel that met the needs of the worker as well as

the corporation (p. 241). "A Study in the Academic Aptitude of University Extension and Campus Students" by Hollis B. Farnum (1956, Summer), compared the success rate of students in an on-campus business relations program with those taking "the same course off campus through an extension facility" (pp. 236-237). These were the only research articles reviewed during this decade but the information they presented was fresh and innovative and the topics relevant to adult educators. But, AE did not choose to pursue any of these areas as a focus of research in proceeding issues.

AEs Professional Literature section reviewed a total of 255 books excluding those with titles mentioned only and pamphlets. Of these 255, only five book reviewed looked with any depth at adult education programs in B&I. A review of Human Relations and Administration. The Case Method Teaching an Interim Statement edited by Kenneth K. Andrews appeared in May 1954. The reviewed concluded with the statement that the book's author "sensed the need for better teaching and learning of executive skills" (p. 187). Another book, Industry-College Relations by Edward Hodnet (1956, Winter) was reviewed by Elburt W. Burr personnel executive for Monsanto Chemical Company. This was the only publication in AE written by a B&I executive not affiliated with a university. Burr emphasized the importance to industry of the adult education programs.

A review of Role Playing in Leadership Training & Group Problem Solving by Alan F. Klein featured a multitude of ways to strengthen communication between executives and their staffs. Management Organization by L.A. Allen (1959, Summer) Allen explored the "dynamics of organization which includes changing organizational structure and the dynamics of change in an interview 230 companies (p. 133). In the same issue, Improving Managerial Performance by V.K. Rowland provided readers with a touch of irony. As the last book reviewed in its decade it offered its readers a backwards look into the conservative line-management style of operation that would all but disappear in the large corporations over the next thirty years..

Other books reviewed with implied but not stated implications for B&I included New Ways to Better Meetings by Bert Frances Strauss and Learning Through Discussion by Nathaniel Cantor (1950, October). New Understanding of Leadership by Charles E. Hendy reviewed in AE (1958, Spring) explored aspects of skills in various concepts of leadership.

In September 1951 AE ran a symposium on "Trends in Adult Education". Industrial Relations as a subject of study and programming was assessed. This time the concerns of B&I were not left out. It was the most complete coverage in a single issue given to B&I for the next ten years. Abbott Kaplan, of the University of California at Los Angeles, recognized "company-sponsored training program and conferences" (p. 208).



His overview of individual industry concentrated on programs for workers and on the differences between the old concept of managers training workers to the new use of managers communicating with them. As for the managers themselves, Kaplan reported little if any growth experiences available to them via structured educational programs. He said that more executives realized a need to restructure training based on a knowledge of human behavior and motivation.

He recounted two different conclusions drawn from experiments in group relations. One which defined social engineering as a "machine for the engineering of mediocrity" (p. 210) and added that it provides "a healthy appealing rationale for conformity" (p. 210). For his second example he cited the training findings of Johnson and Johnson who contended based on their own training programs that because industry had a tendency to be so authoritarian it is "even more necessary in industry than in say education or government that every opportunity be given subordinates to express their view" (p. 211). This was the only report AE featured using the experience of a major corporation in adult education programs and the only article that focused specifically on training in a corporation. (The 1957, Spring issue of AE published a review of the article "Management Development: A Phenomenon in Adult Education" which summarized the development of educational programs at Johnson and Johnson.)

The "Trends" report continued in the October, 1952 issue. Unlike Kaplan's four page report the report from labor was six and one-half pages edited by five prominent leaders in labor education. Nothing relating to education in business and industry was published in AE in 1953 except in AEA's second National Conference report (1953, January). In a section which examined recommendations for various of adult education programs, under the heading "Industry" was the statement, "no specific recommendations" (pp. 42-43).

Six year later "Continuing Education & Individual Responsibility" by Thomas H. Carroll was published (1959, Summer). In a section concerned with executives Carroll reported on programs directly involved with educating corporate leadership. His focus was on formal education programs which operated under the auspices of major companies like General Electric who Carroll reported owned their own Management Research and Development Institute (p. 241).

Though the articles on B&I were few and far between in the pages of AE and the coverage of adult education with regards to programs in B&I was minimal, there were a number of topics discussed throughout the 1950s that revealed an increased activity of innovative program implementations like in-company training, communication skills for executives, management training, human relations programs how-to books and articles on improving executive skills and basic management techniques involving motivation, leadership and management direction.

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**WHOM SHOULD WE FUND? A MULTI-SITE STUDY OF PROGRAM ADAPTATION,  
IMPLEMENTATION AND PERSISTENCE IN A PUBLIC AGENCY GRANTS PROGRAM  
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**Abstract:** The Division of Health Education of a state health department evaluated its replication grants for program adaptation, implementation and persistence. Findings have implications for grantmaking programs and agencies promoting program implementation and maintenance within host organizations.

Since 1984, the Division of Health Education of a southeastern state health department has funded local organizations to replicate health promotion programs refined and proven effective elsewhere. Popular topics have included nutrition, tobacco, exercise, and substance abuse prevention. Applications are subjected to competitive review. Goals are (1) to fund quality programs in organizations which, due to time, financial and expertise limitations, would otherwise be unable to offer them; (2) to increase interest in and visibility for health promotion; (3) to build host organizations' capacity to offer programs; and (4) for organizations to carry on the program in some worthwhile adaptation after the one-year funding period has expired.

Research questions were: (1) How well were the programs implemented? (2) When programs were adapted, how were they different from the original plan or packaged program? (3) What organizational qualities or practices were related to successful adaptation and implementation? (4) In what ways were programs persisting within the host organization after the one-year funding period? (5) What organizational qualities or practices were related to successful program persistence?

A Division staff member carried out the evaluation. Research questions were generated through stakeholder interviews with Division staff. The study lies within the diffusion of innovations tradition which has increasingly examined implementation and institutionalization of adopted innovations (Rogers, 1983; Basch, 1986). In this tradition, the "innovation" is usually a defined social program, but in this study "innovation" was broadened to include the entire set of process objectives proposed in the grant proposal. Previous research has tested and refined process models for program institutionalization (Goodman and Steckler, 1989). The present study searched inductively for adaptation, implementation and persistence and related organizational characteristics and processes.

**Methods:** All grants of a recent year ( $n = 11$ ) were selected because they represented a broad sampling of topics, agencies and groups served (Yin, 1984) (Figure 1).

Grant applications and quarterly reports were collected. Semi-structured telephone interviews with program managers were also conducted, supplemented by telephone interviews with other key informants from the agency and community for some of the grants. Member checks were conducted with selected interviewees to help confirm validity of interpretation.

A study of the implementation of each detailed element of eleven distinct adopted "packaged" programs was logistically impossible. Thus, Level of Success (LoS), a proxy measure of program implementation, was developed by dividing the number of process objectives actually implemented by the number of process objectives planned in the grant proposal. This method is limited because not all objectives are of equal importance, some are intentionally jettisoned, and because reported implementation may be biased, raising questions about content validity. It does, however, provide a rapid assessment of the general degree of implementation. A more thorough understanding was obtained through the interviews, which generally converged with quarterly report data (Mathison, 1988). Three practices which are known to reduce the potential self-report bias in assessing implementation were followed: interviewing staff directly responsible for programs, close in time to the implementation experience, and asking about specific actions rather than general questions about level of use or "satisfaction" (Scheirer and Rezmovic, 1983).

This study may be understood as an initial persistence study, since the study was conducted within six months after the funding period expired, and since a methodologically sophisticated assessment of institutionalization was not pursued (Yin, 1979). Persistence was rated as "nil," with nothing left of the

Figure 1: Site-Ordered Outcome Matrix for Replication Grants \*

|                         | Versailles<br>Extension                                                                | Edenton<br>Health Dpt.                                                             | Pineland<br>Health Dpt.                                                                        | Walsall<br>Extension                         | Mountain<br>Voluntary                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Nature of<br>Program    | Urban<br>nutrition<br>education<br>with<br>immigrant<br>ethnic<br>minority<br>families | Rural youth<br>substance<br>abuse<br>prevention<br>through<br>churches<br>(broker) | Rural youth<br>substance<br>abuse<br>prevention<br>through<br>schools &<br>community<br>groups | School<br>nutrition<br>education<br>(broker) | Rural<br>self-help<br>smoking<br>cessation |
| Degree of<br>Adaptation | Nil                                                                                    | High                                                                               | High                                                                                           | Low                                          | Low                                        |
| LoS                     | 0.2                                                                                    | 0.5                                                                                | 0.5                                                                                            | 0.72                                         | 0.75                                       |
| Level of<br>Persistence | Nil                                                                                    | Insufficient<br>data                                                               | High                                                                                           | Low                                          | Low                                        |

|                         | Community<br>Rural Hlth.                                | Friendship<br>4-H                        | Atlantic<br>Pastor's                                                       | Grange<br>Health Dpt.                                               | Davis<br>Extension                       | New City<br>Schools                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Nature of<br>Program    | Rural older<br>adult<br>general<br>wellness<br>(broker) | Rural<br>adult<br>fitness &<br>nutrition | Urban<br>adult<br>nutrition<br>through<br>African-<br>American<br>churches | Rural<br>adult<br>nutrition<br>in African-<br>American<br>community | Rural<br>adult<br>nutrition<br>education | Urban<br>worksites<br>general<br>wellness |
| Degree of<br>Adaptation | High                                                    | High                                     | High                                                                       | High                                                                | Low                                      | High                                      |
| LoS                     | 0.8                                                     | 0.9                                      | 1                                                                          | 1                                                                   | 1                                        | 1                                         |
| Level of<br>Persistence | High                                                    | High                                     | Nil                                                                        | Nil                                                                 | Moderate                                 | Moderate                                  |

\*Sponsoring agency names are pseudonyms.

program at the time of the study, "low," with only small parts remaining, "moderate," with substantial parts remaining, or "high," with the innovation remaining virtually intact. Case records were compiled and sorted according to study questions and emerging categories (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The strength of the conclusions is based on the number of cases which confirm them. The cases which were exceptions are explicable through careful analysis of the data.

**Findings:** Figure 1 presents the performance of the 11 sites on the major research questions. Highlights of findings for questions 1-5 are summarized below.

**1. How well were the programs implemented?** Figure 1 shows that the LoS range was from 1.00 (complete implementation,  $n = 4$ ), to 0.20. The top six in LoS may be grouped as highly successful implementations. These missed few process objectives, and those missed were not critical to their success, such as Friendship 4-H's failing to evaluate behavior change in post-tests.

Mountain Voluntary Association replicated a mass media/self-help smoking cessation program in a



rural region. Developed by the group's Chicago affiliate, it consisted of broadcast smoking cessation messages and promotion of self-help manuals distributed by local health departments and businesses. Their major implementation problem was in distributing only 2000 of their goal of 7000 manuals.

Edenton and Pineland Health Districts started slowly but persisted with substance abuse prevention programs. Edenton's was not implemented at all during most of the one-year funding period. Only two of twelve trained volunteers did any of the program with their church youth groups by the end of the year. After the nurse who wrote the grant left, an experienced health educator took over and adapted it through careful and sensitive community organization, with moderate success. Pineland's original volunteers balked at the time commitment. Only persistence in training and finding sites to conduct the program resulted in eventual delivery. After the educator resigned, the health director immediately recruited another and sent her to a training so the program could continue.

Versailles Extension, in a non-success category by itself, trained two nutritionists to reach urban "at-risk low income minority" persons. The program was never implemented due to "recruitment problems." After trying unsuccessfully to persuade the health department to give them names, the agent got referrals from the immigration office. These families were not successfully enrolled because "there were three or four families living together in the same house ... we could not arrange for a meeting." The agent found the entire project "very frustrating," and gave up.

2. *When programs were adapted, how were they different from the original plan or packaged program?*

Research has shown that innovations are usually re-invented or adapted as the adopting organization implements them (Rogers, 1983). Several studies have shown that programs that were customized by adopting schools were more often continued and less likely to be discontinued (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). A balancing concern, however, is reduced effectiveness through "blunting" or "downsizing" of innovations, as opposed to "accuracy" or "fidelity" (Huberman and Miles, 1984). This study found adaptation to be associated with implementation success.

Grange's educator attached herself to some influential local guides who gave her credibility, trust and access to her target audience - rural, older African American adults. Soon she formed a project steering committee - "the best thing I have ... my consultants" - which included target group members. This group made many decisions about the program, including changing inappropriate materials and presenters. The educator said, "I ... appreciated the openness of this group because ... they took a genuine interest in seeing this project succeed ... [T]hey met regularly, provided needed information and accepted assignments."

Community Rural Health System's (CRHS) program for older adults was significantly adapted. Its director said, "It's hard, at the beginning, to pick something that will work ... [when] you're dealing with real people, not just ideas ... if you don't adapt, you lose your folks. When you pay \$2,500 for a program, you don't think you're going to have to do a third of the work yourself." CRHS used a leadership training model to diffuse the program concepts into the most powerful local older adult organization, the AARP chapter, which already had a health committee. This indigenous committee then found ways to embody the concepts in locally appropriate ways, including teaming up with the recreation department to develop a thriving walking program.

Mountain Voluntary's distribution problem with self-help manuals may be linked to inadequate re-invention of the Chicago-based program. The director explained that people were "not willing to come down out of the mountains to pick up a manual." Such blaming disguises another possible reason for implementation failure: the agency did not find out what they should do to make the manuals accessible to much of the target population (Jackson, 1988).

3. *What organizational qualities or practices are related to successful program adaptation and implementation?* Several factors or processes were helpful, including: organizational fit, or compatibility of the program with the host organization's core mission; use of a participatory process, especially if the program is cross-cultural, or a new population, or a new type of program for the staff; adequate program installation practice if the funded organization is acting as a program broker;

community interest; and publicity.

Community health promotion is *the* focus of CHRS, and they had ties to many indigenous groups. Their leadership training model with AARP was very helpful, as was Grange's "steering committee" approach. CHRS was a broker, diffusing programs into other organizations. Brokering requires diligent attention to implementation problems in host organizations. A recreation department collaborator said: "[The CHRS staff member] is a marvelous person to all the different organizations that work together. [She] has been a real help to me. She's given me a host of other materials; I had not worked with senior citizens much in my career." This kind of long-term support, complementing skills training, is key to the success of innovations (Huberman and Miles, 1984).

Walsall Extension's brokering model, by contrast, was inadequate. When asked what they had done to help schools implement the nutrition education program, the agent conceded that "with teachers, you just give them the information and hope that they do it". Further, in order to answer this evaluator's questions, the agent needed to call teachers. This falls short of the detailed formative and process evaluation and consultation needed to ensure and enhance implementation (Huberman and Miles, 1984; Scheirer, 1981).

The extension nutrition programs were also aided by organizational fit. According to a state extension official, community nutrition has "been the expectation for 75 years of operation ... Extension agents have always had to go out into the community ... they're used to that." Friendship 4-H's director said community education is "their programmatic priority in this county." Consequently, she had years of experience, content and population expertise, and local credibility. She attributed success to the fact that "we have a good pulse beat of the lives of the people we work with, because we work with them day to day, every day." The agent told how she had gained credibility by losing forty pounds in her own programs, and had since reached over 1,000 persons over a ten-year period: "All you have to do is have credibility, and get a few people on your team who also do, and just watch it happen."

Negative examples include Mountain Voluntary (see above), which had little up-front formative evaluation, and Versailles Extension, which had organizational support but no experience with this population and no evidence of participatory planning.

An exception to the organizational fit requirement was Grange's strong rural "steering committee" nutrition program (above), which was more tolerated than supported by this clinically-oriented organization. When the educator, who said "the commitment of the health department was not there," later resigned, the department did not fill her position.

4. *In what ways are programs continuing to be implemented by the host organization after the one-year funding program?* Effective programs desired by clients and staff should probably continue, because early termination diminishes impact, reduces beneficiaries over time, and can make it difficult to regain community trust (Goodman and Steckler, 1989). A range of persistence outcomes was found.

Friendship 4-H and Pineland Health District were expanding by using their own funds. CHRS, a broker, continued to offer assistance to spinoffs, such as through AARP, the recreation department, and Senior Centers. Low persistence is of interest in Walsall Extension's brokered schools, and with Mountain Voluntary, which is still looking for ways to introduce self-help smoking cessation into the community. Atlantic Pastor's Council's fully-implemented and well-received nutrition program for urban African American adults terminated on the day the funding ended. Grange's programs likewise stopped completely after the educator resigned and no replacement was rehired.

5. *What organizational qualities or practices were related to program persistence?* All programs with high or moderate persistence had had high or moderate implementations. Thus, organizational qualities and practices that aided implementation also increased the likelihood of persistence. Sound implementation, however, did not guarantee persistence, a finding previously reported (Goodman & Steckler, 1989). For example, while Grange's educator (see under question 3) and Edenton's successfully implemented without organizational fit, not a single program *persisted* without that fit. Edenton was another health department that did not rehire after the educator resigned, imperiling

persistence. Atlantic Pastor's Council's fully-implemented program also did not persist, for several probable reasons. First, health programs are not a core part of the organization's mission, as compared to AARP in the CRHS case, for example. Second, the coordinators were students not prepared to offer ongoing support for the change desires they stimulated (again contrast CRHS). Third, their model was one of offering direct services to the population, rather than leadership development (once again compare CRHS). According to the Council president, "they literally did all of the logistics, details to make it work ... we provided the space, resources, people." Although they worked within an indigenous organization, their unit of practice was the individual, because they did not try to change organizational capacity, but only individuals' nutrition behavior. Central to lasting programmatic change is some type of planned organizational development, and this was omitted (Eng and Young, 1992).

Secondary effects, such as improved staff and community skill, problem-solving ability, leadership and confidence may be more important than narrowly-defined persistence. "Governments and foundations might do well to think of their grants as investments in people rather than investments in programs. Programs are merely vehicles for the solution of problems and the training of people to be able to solve other problems" (Green, 1989, p. 44). This does not render the present study unimportant, however, because more favorable learning will probably occur when programs are implemented and obtain persistence. In contrast to the Versailles Extension agent who found the process "very frustrating" and gave up, are the words of Friendship 4-H's coordinator: "We have always been committed, but even more so now ... We feel that the state health department, through the grant, has given us the impetus to continue moving forward with this type of programming. We are indeed grateful ... and are very mindful of the fact that it has helped us get our program off and moving." And according to a CRHS staff member, "seven years ago, exercise was not a part of anything [here] ... there is much more interest [now] than there ever was ... [and] a much activated AARP chapter. [T]hat organization is now very health-conscious and involved."

**Implications:** Grantmaking agencies should use RFP's, interviews, site visits and/or letters of support to: (1) Examine organizational fit before funding. The more central a program's methods, content area, and target population were to the historic *de facto* mission of the agency, the more likely it was to be implemented and persist. Organizational fit was clearly mediated through administrative support and staff expertise with the program's content, population and *modus operandi*, based on their experience working within that supportive organizational environment. (Skilled staff in Edenton and Grange had gained their experience elsewhere). (2) Look for evidence of community support and attention to formative evaluation through participatory planning, especially if a program or population is somewhat new to an organization. (3) If brokering organizations are funded, be sure they will offer adequate assistance to host organizations, such as leadership training, participatory adaptation, and ongoing support. (4) Train and consult with funded staff on implementation and persistence, and carefully track programs.

It is also incumbent upon graduate programs in health and adult education to offer training in organizational change. In this study, educators' effectiveness was clearly related to skill in implementing innovations and in promoting their persistence.

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## UNDERSTANDING ADULT LEARNERS' PREFERENCES FOR CLASSROOM SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

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### ABSTRACT

This exploratory study sought to identify learner characteristics that explain preferences for classroom social environment. Data about preferences for classroom social environment and about learner characteristics were collected by means of a self-completion, selected-response survey instrument administered in a variety of adult education settings. Data were then subjected to both simple and multiple regression analyses. Educational attainment, social introversion/extroversion, and gender were found to be the best predictors of environmental preferences.

### THE PROBLEM

The social environment of an adult education classroom can be an important determinant of effective and satisfying learning. However, even the most committed and flexible adult educator comes to realize that, because different learners thrive in different types of social environments, it is impossible to satisfy the environmental preferences of every learner in a given classroom. For both theoretical and practical reasons, adult educators need to understand the origins of the inevitably different preferences for social environment that adult learners carry into educational situations.

### METHOD

#### Identification of Predictor Variables

In the early stages of the research, individual and group interviews were conducted to identify likely explanatory variables. These interviews, combined with a review of relevant literature, led to the identification of six promising variables for explaining preferences for social environment: (a) early school history, (b) social introversion/extroversion, (c) age, (d) gender, (e) educational attainment, and (f) household income.

#### Instrumentation

Data about the six identified variables and about preferences for classroom social environment were measured by means of a unified, self-completion, selected-response survey instrument. The measures embedded in the research instrument were as follows.

### 1. Adult Classroom Environment Scale (ACES)

The ACES was developed at Rutgers University by Gordon Darkenwald, Thomas Valentine, and a group of nine adult education doctoral students (most of whom were working adult educators) during the period from 1984-1985. Since that time, it has been used by many other researchers.

The items comprising the ACES were drawn from interviews with adult learners and adult educators and from a careful examination of social environment instruments developed for other populations and related purposes. The items were then inductively classified into seven dimensions by our research team. The items employ a Likert-type response format, with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 4 = Strongly Agree.

The ACES yields seven distinct scores, each reflective of one of the interrelated "dimensions" that, together, comprise a classroom's social environment.

Involvement measures the extent to which students are actively and enthusiastically engaged in the learning process.

Affiliation measures the extent to which students work together and enjoy being in class with one another.

Teacher Support measures the extent to which the teacher supports, encourages, and shows respect for students.

Task Orientation measures the extent to which class activities and student work are focused on learning progress.

Personal Goal Attainment measures the extent to which the class structure and the teacher accommodate individual student goals and interests.

Organization and Clarity measures the extent to which the class is well-structured and the extent to which that structure is communicated to the students.

Student Influence measures the extent to which students, as a group, have the power to shape the class's structure and goals.

The validity of the ACES rests largely upon the sources for the items and on the credibility of the "expert panel" that produced the instrument. Some researchers (notably Langenbach and Aagaard in Adult Education Quarterly in Winter of 1990) have challenged the construct validity of ACES dimensions on factor analytic grounds. Ultimately, however, the practical

utility of the original dimensions appears to outweigh such attempts to discover a deeper but less conceptually meaningful dimensional structure.

There are two forms of the ACES. Form R measures the "real" or "actual" classroom environment. Form I measures the "ideal" or "preferred" classroom environment. Only Form I was used in this study. Based on the current data, reliability coefficients (alphas) for the seven dimensions are as follows: Involvement, .75; Affiliation, .67; Teacher Support, .74; Task Orientation, .58; Personal Goal Attainment, .62; Organization and Clarity, .81; and Student Influence, .69.

## 2. The Educational Experience Scale

The Educational Experience Scale was developed during the course of this study to gather information about early educational experiences that might have shaped current preferences. The scale consists of seven items drawn from interviews with adult learners. The items employ a Likert-type response format, with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 4 = Strongly Agree. The seven items are:

1. In elementary school and high school, I seldom did well in classes
2. In elementary school and high school, other students almost always treated me well in class
3. In elementary school and high school, people almost always made me feel comfortable in class
4. In elementary school and high school, my teachers almost always liked my school work
5. In elementary school and high school, I almost always looked forward to attending my classes
6. In elementary school and high school, I seldom enjoyed my classes
7. In elementary school and high school, my educational experiences were almost always successful

The educational experience scale had an observed reliability (alpha) of .86.

## 3. Social Introversion/Extroversion Scale

The Social Introversion/Extroversion Scale was developed during the course of this study to identify personality factors that might influence environmental preferences. The scale consists of eight items drawn from interviews with adult learners and from a review of the literature. The items employ a Likert-type response format, with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 4 = Strongly Agree. The eight items are:

1. I make new friends easily
2. I am a shy person
3. I like to meet new people

4. I dislike talking to students
5. I enjoy being with other people
6. I sometimes feel uncomfortable in large groups of people
7. I am a talkative person
8. I rarely speak in group situations

The social introversion-extroversion scale had an observed reliability (alpha) of .79.

#### 4. Background Variables

Under a section called "Background Information," the following additional variables were measured: (a) Age, (b) Gender, (c) Educational Attainment, and (d) Approximate Household Income.

#### Sample

A total of 450 surveys were collected in diverse adult education settings. Because the multivariate analytical methods used in this study required the use of all variables simultaneously, list-wise deletion of cases was employed during the the data preparation stage.

The final sample consisted of 362 adult learners from the following settings: (a) inservice workshops for adult literacy educators ( $n=159$ ); (b) adult vocational training programs ( $n=153$ ); (c) conferences at a university continuing education center ( $n=35$ ); and (d) displaced homemaker programs ( $n=15$ ).

The final sample had the following characteristics:

- Mean age: 38.4
- Percent female: 54.7%
- Educational Attainment:
  - High School Diploma or Less: 40.9%
  - Associates Degree: 8.3%
  - Bachelor's Degree: 24.0%
  - Graduate Degree: 26.8%
- Mean household income: \$45,525

#### DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using simple regression analyses and multiple regression analyses. All analyses were based on an  $n$  of 362. Simple regressions were conducted first. Based on an examination of the simple regression coefficients, promising multiple regression models were constructed and tested. For each dimension of classroom social environment, a "best" explanatory model was identified based on the proven significance of individual parameters and the percent of variance explained by the model.



# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the simple regression analyses are depicted in Table 1. As can be seen from an examination of that table, most of the coefficients are quite low, suggesting that, with few exceptions, the identified learner characteristics--when considered separately--were generally weak predictors of preferences for social environment. Several things are worth noting:

- None of the predictor variables is significantly related to preferences for Task Orientation.
- Educational attainment is the best single predictor; it explains approximately 5% of the observed variance in four of the seven dimensions and fully 13% of the variance in Personal Goal Attainment.
- Gender and Social Introversion/Extroversion have moderate predictive power with respect to certain dimensions.

Table 1. Predictors of Preferences for Classroom Social Environment: Summary of Significant Simple Regressions and Percent Variance Explained

| Predictor Variable                   | Social Environment Variables |             |             |      |              |             |             |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                      | INV                          | AFF         | TEA         | TASK | PER          | ORG         | STU         |
| Educational Experience               | ns                           | .13<br>1.7% | .14<br>2.0% | ns   | .18<br>3.2%  | .15<br>2.3% | ns          |
| Social Introversion/<br>Extroversion | .15<br>2.3%                  | .22<br>4.8% | .22<br>4.8% | ns   | .15<br>2.3%  | .17<br>2.9% | .15<br>2.3% |
| Age                                  | .16<br>2.6%                  | .12<br>1.4% | .18<br>3.2% | ns   | .20<br>4.0%  | .16<br>2.6% | ns          |
| Gender<br>(0=male,<br>1=female)      | ns                           | .13<br>1.7% | .20<br>4.0% | ns   | .24<br>5.8%  | .11<br>1.2% | .24<br>5.8% |
| Educational Attainment               | .24<br>5.8%                  | .19<br>3.6% | .22<br>4.8% | ns   | .36<br>13.0% | .22<br>4.8% | .24<br>5.8% |
| Household Income                     | .13<br>1.7%                  | ns          | ns          | ns   | .17<br>2.9%  | .17<br>2.9% | .11<br>1.2% |

Table 2 depicts the results of the multiple regression analyses. Generally, the derived models produced more encouraging results; however, while statistically significant relationships are readily apparent, one should keep in mind that much of the observed variance is left unaccounted for by the identified variables. Again, these variables shed no light on differences in preferences for Task Orientation. It is noteworthy that the combination of Educational Attainment, Gender, Social Introversion/Extroversion explain substantial proportions of the variance in preferences for Personal Goal Attainment (17%), Student Influence (11%) and Teacher Support (11%)--three dimensions that are critical elements of an andragogical approach to adult education.

Table 2. Predictors of Preferences for Classroom Social Environment: Summary of Best Multiple Regression Models

| Dependent Variables   | Predictors |      |      |       | Model |       |       |
|-----------------------|------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                       | Variables  | Beta | t    | p     | F     | R-Sq. | p     |
| Involvement           | Ed Attain  | .24  | 4.61 | .0001 | 14.74 | .076  | .0001 |
|                       | Intr/Extr  | .11  | 2.23 | .03   |       |       |       |
| Affiliation           | Intr/Extr  | .20  | 3.91 | .0001 | 14.24 | .074  | .0001 |
|                       | Ed Attain  | .16  | 3.08 | .002  |       |       |       |
| Teacher Support       | Intr/Extr  | .19  | 3.71 | .0002 | 14.31 | .107  | .0001 |
|                       | Gender     | .16  | 3.08 | .002  |       |       |       |
|                       | Ed Attain  | .16  | 3.20 | .002  |       |       |       |
| Task Orientation      | --         |      |      |       |       |       |       |
| Personal Goal Attain  | Ed Attain  | .31  | 6.35 | .0001 | 24.39 | .170  | .0001 |
|                       | Gender     | .18  | 3.67 | .0003 |       |       |       |
|                       | Intr/Extr  | .10  | 2.03 | .04   |       |       |       |
| Organizat'n & Clarity | Ed Attain  | .17  | 3.31 | .001  | 11.27 | .059  | .0001 |
|                       | Intr/Extr  | .15  | 2.93 | .004  |       |       |       |
| Student Influence     | Gender     | .20  | 3.86 | .0001 | 14.88 | .111  | .0001 |
|                       | Ed Attain  | .19  | 3.82 | .0002 |       |       |       |
|                       | Intr/Extr  | .11  | 2.25 | .03   |       |       |       |

## THE LETTERS IN THE ATTIC: The Mid-life Perspectives of Educated Women Reflecting on Personal Success and Achievement

Joyce A. Walker, Ph.D.

**Abstract:** This paper advocates for qualitative research as a methodology to study contemporary closed groups and private materials in their time.

At the Smithsonian Institute, a group of Native Americans from the Zuni Nation spoke with a small audience about the disrespectful behavior of tourists who visit their reservation lands. When the discussion turned to taking photographs, a listener asked, "How can a visitor be a respectful tourist?" The speaker replied, "Don't come to take our pictures and go away and tell stories about us. Come and listen to our stories." Rigoberta Menchu, the Nobel prize winner responded in a similar fashion when asked what members of the university community can do to support her work and her people: Don't send your researchers to watch us and leave to tell accounts of us. Come and work with us, hear our stories, and learn what we know.

Let these two stories frame my message: Qualitative research opens doors for educators to access otherwise unavailable text and people, to approach discovery without the motive to prove or predict, and to join with other teachers and learners in adventurous pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Such study is full of risk and opportunity as Gadamer (1981) points out:

*Understanding is an adventure and, like any other adventure, is dangerous. Just because it is not satisfied with simply wanting to register what is there or said there but goes back to our guiding interests and questions, one has to concede that the hermeneutic experience has a far less degree of certainty than that attained by the methods of the natural sciences. But when one realizes that understanding is an adventure, this implies that it affords unique opportunities as well. It is capable of contributing in a special way to the broadening of our human experiences, our self-knowledge, and our horizon, for everything understanding mediates is mediated along with ourselves. (p. 109-110).*

In a discussion of my own research of women's letters, I will consider three aspects of the adventure. First, opportunities exist for researchers willing to study groups of which they are a part. Second, for many researchers raised in the positivist tradition, the qualitative emphasis for understanding can be uncomfortable. Third, the study of contemporary text and living authors provides opportunities for in depth understanding through participant confirmation.

I am the author of the study, *Women's Voices, Women's Lives*, but I am also one of the correspondents. This dual perspective allowed me to engage the other 16 living women to participate in the study with me. In their annual letter exchange, they demonstrated a capacity to be self-reflective, articulate witnesses to their time and their life experiences. As authors of the text, they most intimately understood the intent and context of the narratives. They all agreed to help formulate the coding categories, to review and comment on draft findings, and to confirm the final findings and implications.

My challenge was to mine the letters for insights and themes that developed over the quarter century of living between college graduation and middle age. I established the criteria by which the scholarship and findings would be judged. I systematically coded and analyzed the text using The Ethnograph software as a tool for computerized text management, and I integrated the themes into meaningful groupings. I worked to resolve discrepancies between my understandings and the reflective conversations with the women during the confirmation process.

#### The Letters in the Attic

There exists a fugitive body of potentially important text that is only accessible to "insider" researchers and that can only be studied using qualitative methods. My set of more than 250 letters written by 18 women over a 25 year period is an example. This private correspondence dealing with issues of the private life of women was accessible to me only because I am one of the letter writers.

For more than twenty years, letters exchanged by a group of women from my university days accumulated in assorted files and boxes in the attic. Over time the correspondents began to appreciate the treasure of wisdom and insight captured in their rare annual sharing. In 1984 Eve wrote, "I liked *The Big Chill* but couldn't help thinking what a much better story we could tell." The letters had been tantalizing me as well. The text available was serious, rare, and longitudinal. The women, half a century old in 1992, represented a little studied group, and their stories were not available for study by an outsider. In 1993 I completed an interpretive study of the more than 250 individual letters written between 1968 and 1993.

Interpretive work commonly begins with the answers and concludes with discovery of the question. The hermeneutic approach to interpretive work seeks to make meaning of human behavior as presented in the text and humanely interpret these understandings. The letters -- the text -- is intact. The answer is in hand. The challenge is to discover within the text the question to which the text is the answer. In a Carnak-like reversal reminiscent of Johnny Carson's late night television routine, the researcher sorts through the answers before the question is even framed.

The researcher who chooses to listen to what women say rather than ask questions for women to answer faces two separate and different questions:

1. What is the question to which these letters are a response?



## 2. What do I want to learn from these letters?

According to Gadamer (1981), "One of the more fertile insights of modern hermeneutics is that every statement has to be seen as a response to a question and that the only way to understand a statement is to get hold of the question to which the statement is an answer" (p.10).

After much disciplined and passionate listening, I came to understand six themes fundamental to success and achievement developed by the women in the letters. These themes are present in the writing of all the women, and they persist over time.

1. The women place great value on connection and the continuity of relationships.
  2. Each woman struggled to balance care and responsibility for self and others.
  3. Success for them meant working passionately to make a difference.
  4. All of them had to abandon The Dream and the presumptive search for closure.
  5. It was not easy to establish personal space and find models of success.
  6. Peace came in learning to embrace the wisdom of the defining moments in life.
- While these are not the only themes in the letters, they represent powerful challenges that few if any of the women anticipated or were prepared for when they left the shelter of college to take on the world.

## The Value of Understanding

There is much of value to be learned in the study of a small, relatively homogeneous groups even when the findings cannot be used to prove a truth or predict future trends. Understanding is a worthy, important goal. Obstacles for the researcher are often fundamental and surprising. My own had to do with epistemology, language and trust.

In this study of the women and the letters, I learned an important lesson: I was my own worst enemy! I did not appreciate the power of the positivist tradition in my own education and thinking. I was so entrenched in positivistic thinking, language, methods, and outcomes that I had to remind myself daily what my work was about. My research vocabulary was full of scientific and militaristic language: data, cohort, measure, statistical significance, random samples, reliability, validity, and hypothesis testing. Participants were "little n's" as in  $n=18$ . It took time and conscious effort to speak and to think humanely about texts, interpretations, understandings, lived experience, and meanings.

Trust is a big issue. There is no data run and no " $p=.05$ " to guide the search for understanding. The process is not linear. The interpretive process requires a keen sense of intuition; a willingness to follow a scent or pursue a faint trail; a system of tracking, moving forward, and circling back again to find answers. One must trust one's self and one's judgment. It also involves knowing what to trust, whether to pursue an "outlier" idea or set it aside. For me this meant wide reading in many disciplines not my own. It meant coming to a conclusion without reading absolutely everything ever written on any possibly related subject.

## Essential Confirmation

The people studied or those close to the written text have a stake in the findings. They offer a valuable and intimate perspective that can bring clarity to the search for meaning. They are excellent collaborators in the search for insight.

The researcher as impartial expert is turned upside down when the researcher is a member of the group under study. Of course, if the researcher were not so closely positioned as an insider, it is unlikely that the text would ever be studied or the findings confirmed by the other participants. Expert status must be shared between the researcher and the participants as all are authors and equal experts on the meaning of the text. This poses particularly difficulties in a doctoral dissertation because researchers feel compelled to establish their own expert status.

The participant confirmation process is powerful for the participants and for the researcher. The letter writers came to know the worth of their writings and to see the contribution their sharing made possible. I came to know that my single opinion about the meaning of the letters paled beside the congregate opinion of the sixteen. When the women said emphatically "Yes!" to the findings, the study gained a power to influence that I, as a single researcher, could not possibly achieve.

Without exception, the women were pleased to be a part of the study. They liked the process. They said very positive things: "I'm really glad you involved us in a personal kind of way, and sought our input. I'll continue to enjoy the process by contributing, in a small way, to what you're doing by giving you some written response," and "I'm so glad I said I'd do this, because if I'd never gotten this [manuscript], I'd have felt so bad. It was like all this flashing in front of my eyes. It was like all these things, all these years, it was just incredible." Part of the interest, I believe, came from the affirmation that what had been written was important: "I'm surprised you quoted me as much as you did. I thought, gosh, I'll never even be in there -- I never said anything of substance."

The responses to the content of the written manuscript were likewise enthusiastic. Several women commented on how they skimmed the materials immediately upon receiving them because they couldn't wait to see what the pages contained. One promptly wrote a response:

I loved reading what you wrote!!! It read very easily.... I whipped right through it and was sorry when it ended! It is difficult for me to judge whether it is really fascinating or whether it's fascinating because I am part of it!

Another said in the telephone interview:

It's been like reliving, you know, years and years and years. And then you sort of figure out who you are and what your character is and, I don't know, I can't even describe it. I've had more fun with it.

What is absent can be as important as what is present. Never leave a study of intact text without asking, "What is missing? Why is it not here?" Always listen to informants with an ear to what is avoided and unspoken. The women were able to explain omissions and apparent discrepancies in their views. They clarified their motivations for writing and described their intentions to represent themselves and not their whole world in the letters.

The one thing I've said, and I've said it to [husband] and a couple other people, is basically I could have given you through the years -- everybody through the years -- a whole bunch more, but I didn't dare. And it isn't like I didn't want to tell you, it's that this newsletter became something that everybody in my family read. My boys read it, my husband couldn't wait for it to come. And basically I was afraid at times to just unburden my soul and say some of the things I was thinking. As good as this [manuscript] is, it probably could have been better. I don't know if other families had the same situation occur or not. There were many times I wanted to say how despairing I was. . . but I didn't dare.

In the absence of a prescriptive methodology, the qualitative researcher must expend considerable energy defining and describing the method for the study. Processes for participant engagement in the interpretation and confirmation of the findings must be explored. Questions of researcher access and participation are equally important if we wish to gain access to contemporary closed groups and private materials in their time instead of writing history years later based on lonely examination of the dusty letters in the attic.

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HISTORY AS CRITIQUE: COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATION  
IN CONSTRUCTING THE PASTS OF ADULT EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** If we are to understand who we are as educators in the present as well as who we hope to become, then we must examine and critique how we have collectively represented who we have been.

Reconstructing the past is always an ideological practice, not just a simple matter of getting the "facts." Along with Welton (1993) and others, we are concerned that attempts to "do" history in the field of adult education (both traditional history like that of Grattan and Knowles and revisionist like that of Law and Rockhill) are largely undertheorized, both conceptually and procedurally. So the purpose of this paper is to argue that we see the reconstructing of the past as way of critiquing our current educational practices (Benjamin, 1973) and to suggest alternative interpretive and historiographic approaches. Thus, we address the question of how our collective memory of the past has come to be represented in the present and provide a framework for asking whose interests such constructions serve.

Welton (1993) in a provocative essay raises certain questions which we feel warrant serious attention and to which this paper is a guarded response. Welton's observation is that adult education historians, perhaps like many historians in general, are "disinclined to reflect on philosophical or epistemological matters" and "just want to get on with it" (p. 5). In response to his pressing question of getting on with what, Welton directs our attention to two historiographic questions: the problem of the object and the problem of usability. Welton argues that historians are "inescapably presentist": "We have seen that even the meta-historiographic problem of the object does not escape ideological intrusion. When we write history, we are entering into a conversation with the past in order to illuminate the multiple meanings and possibilities of the present in dialogue with others who may be telling different stories. We are forced to become more self-reflective about our own interpretive strategies, and open to alternative readings. We are encouraged to engage one another, and through persuasion, convince our dialogue partners that our interpretation makes most sense. We are challenged, in the last analysis, to speak clearly about what values we wish to uphold in the present world" (p. 20)

Actually, we think it is more than just a questions of upholding values--it is the serious issue of examining what these values look like in our concrete social practices. Consequently, to respond to these concerns, we seek to develop an argument based on the conviction that history is a crucial element in coming to understand our current practice as educators. Toward this end we develop three propositions. First, we draw upon the work of Foucault (1984) to argue that the purpose of constructing history is not to reveal some hidden, transcendental meaning nor merely to "report" the past but to reveal the processes and mechanisms by which we produce and invent ourselves and our cultural practices in the present. Next, to understand how we create our current activities as educators, we draw upon Williams' (1977) argument that within any cultural practice, including adult education, a "selective tradition" emerges which reinforces a particular understanding of the past. Such understandings evolve as traditions which form a collective identity serving certain interests to the exclusion of others. Finally, given the postmodern presence of multiple traditions, we conclude with Bernstein's (1992) argument that the purpose of history is to analyze the traditions in which cultural practices are acted out in order to expose prejudgments, prejudices, and illusions. Thus, in this discussion we seek to animate Bernstein's cardinal principle that the basic condition for all understanding requires us to test and risk our convictions and prejudgments in and through encounters with what is truly "other" in what he would refer to as a "critically engaged dialogue." We realize, of course, that this Habermasian telos is so routinely evoked as to become almost cliché. But our attempt here is to bound the focus of critical dialogues to our practices as educators as they



historically evolve. Thus the critical encounter must be with the history (and how we construct it) of ourselves. And we can only do that by reclaiming the neglected or deliberately ignored pasts out of which our current practices are constructed. Without that encounter, we can neither reveal nor examine our convictions and prejudgments about who we are and who we can become as educators. So history becomes both the medium and the outcome by which we structure these encounters.

#### THE NON-TRANSCENDENTAL SELF AND THE MYTH OF CONTINUITY

How can we construct such a critical project? If it is true, as Bernstein (1992) argues in an analysis of the history of philosophy, that we are trapped in our own prejudices inherited from the past, then how can we animate the kinds of critical encounters many of us feel are necessary? The question thus becomes both historiographic and ontological: how do we construct history and to what ends do we construct it? We turn to the work of Foucault to begin a response.

Foucault (1984) argues that we can't understand modernity simply as an historical epoch. Drawing on Baudelaire, Foucault argues that "modern man [sic], for Baudelaire, is not man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself. This modernity does not 'liberate man in his own being'; it compels him to face the task of producing himself" (p. 42). As Bernstein (1992) notes, Foucault relentlessly attacks the notion that "human beings have some hidden essence" (p. 146) which once we discover it will help us achieve freedom and autonomy. Thus for Foucault, there is no secret or hidden essence of who we are, just the "task of producing or inventing ourselves" (Bernstein, 1992, p. 146). Consequently, the issue that Foucault brings to our attention is the notion of creating "a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (1984, p. 42).

What does Foucault mean by critique? The following passage provides several important indications of Foucault's intentions:

...criticism is no longer to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value, but rather as a historical investigation into events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying. In that sense criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method. archaeological--and not transcendental--in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom. (1984, p. 46)

As Foucault argues, we have to understand our primary nature as one of becoming rather than as a disguised, or as yet unrevealed, essentialism. Thus Foucault proposes a "critical ontology of ourselves...in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (1984, p. 50). As such, he directly points to the place of history in this notion of permanent critique.

Historiographically, Foucault's work suggests that such encounters can be begun through a process of discourse analysis (1965, 1972, 1973). Discourse analysis is an approach to historical construction which worries less about attributing dates, people, and places to specific temporal analyses and is more concerned with revealing and critiquing the deep structures of

"texts," which are windows to the pervasive elements of social meaning. Texts must be understood in the broader sense of context, such as institutions, social practices, techniques, and cultural objects, rather than its simpler paper connotation. In analyzing historical context, we seek to show "how the different texts with which one is dealing refer to one another, organize themselves into a single figure...and carry meanings that may be common to a whole period....and in this way one substitutes for the diversity of the things said a sort of great, uniform text, which has never before been articulated, and which reveals for first time what men [sic] 'really meant'...(1972, p. 118), which Foucault has elsewhere described as "an excess of the signified over the signifier; a necessary, unformulated remainder of thought that language has left in the shade" (1973, p. xvi). This is the framework in which historical analysis becomes archaeological and genealogical. It is archaeological in the sense that our historical analysis seeks to reveal that which is not apparent, and genealogical in the sense that the purpose of the construction is to demonstrate how the unrevealed is constituted in our current becoming.

Using Foucault's process of discourse analysis it is possible to demonstrate that past adult education writings can be interpreted as cultural texts which, while individually authored, are also understandable as the medium through which collectively endorsed educational practices are represented and reproduced rather than initiated. For example, it has been argued (Wilson, 1993) that the adult education handbooks demonstrate a "great, uniform text" personifying and reproducing the uncritical adoption of a scientist ideology for professionalizing the practice of adult education. By looking at the discourse of such collections we can see how certain ideological structures, in this case the scientist orientation, come to dominate our collective perception as a field and drive our educational practices to the exclusion of others. Such texts, and others such as the original black book and its progeny, the new black (and blue) book, can be seen as both constitutive and reproductive in the sense that they uncritically define and elaborate historically emerging orthodoxies that privilege a selective construction of the past. While they are often viewed as repositories of "new" knowledge that is intended to improve our continuing practice as educators, they can also be understood as collectively endorsed conservative attempts to structure the boundaries of permissible action as professional educators. As such, these texts, regardless of individual authorship, represent selective appeals to historically dominant frameworks as a way of legitimizing certain forms of current practice to the exclusion of others.

Before leaving Foucault, we need to address the specter that has haunted his work, namely, given its profound skepticism, his dogged disavowal of any appeals to standards by which to judge and orient our criticisms (Bernstein, 1992). Foucault has defined his project as trying to "grasp the implicit systems which determine our most familiar behavior without our knowing it. I am trying to find their origin, to show their formation, the constraint they impose upon us. I am therefore trying to place myself at a distance from them and to show how one could escape" (Partisan Review, 38, 1971, as cited in Bernstein, 1992, p. 171). Many acknowledge that his corpus represents masterly unveilings but, just as importantly, feel his work is caught in its own incoherency. Paraphrasing Habermas' analysis of Foucault, Bernstein claims that "critique--even genealogical critique--must preserve at least one standard by which we engage in critique of the present. Yet when critique is totalized, when critique turns against itself so that all rational standards are called into question, then one is caught in performative contradictions" (1992, p. 151). Thus, while Foucault is a skilled at the "rhetoric of disruption," he invites a radical historicism in the specter of relativism. By eschewing an appeal to any standards, we are left with the profound nihilism of no standards. While Bernstein does an admirable job of blunting this critique of Foucault, even he finally admits that Foucault's later work is only suggestive of a moral agent capable of mastering itself. But, even so, Bernstein notes that "Foucault not only fails to explicate this sense of agency, his genealogical analyses seem effectively to undermine any talk of agency which is not a precipitate of power/knowledge regimes" (1992, p. 164). So, how can we mount a permanent critique of our historical present if we eschew any appeals to a (false) foundationalism while simultaneously disrupting any ground upon which we might mount an analysis?

## THE SELECTIVE TRADITION AS RELATIONAL TO THE OTHER

It is not our intention to wade too deeply into the Cartesian Anxiety that haunts the project of the Enlightenment (Bernstein, 1983). We are, however, intrigued with this notion of mounting "a permanent critique of our historical era" (Foucault, 1984, p. 42) and have tried to be suggestive of how we can begin to engage such a critique. But, if the purpose of history is to reveal the mechanisms by which we invent ourselves in the present, we must also deal with the very real issue of how our political-ethical horizons will bound such analysis (Bernstein, 1992), for we can never "be" outside of history in the sense of privileging no view. Foucault fails us at this point, so we find ourselves turning to Williams' (1977) notion of the selective tradition which he defines as "an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification" (p. 115). The selective tradition is part of the hegemonic culture which supports or maintains the present social structure, including adult education, which benefits the dominant groups to the disadvantage of the subordinate groups. The selective tradition consists in part of the orthodox or mainstream view of history. The term hegemony, derived from Gramsci (1971), refers to the process by which the dominant culture comes to permeate the total culture, or as Williams says, "the whole way of life" (p. 17). The hegemonic selective tradition manifests and perpetuates itself through the socialization process, and it is within and through educational processes that the selective tradition is passed from one generation to the next. The selective tradition seeks to perpetuate the myths of the past; that is, it seeks to read the past as history and tradition in such a way that the past/history is used to justify the present. So, to the question of where to look for the standards to ground our critique of the present, we argue that the standards themselves are not only an historically-evolving and community-based phenomenon (Kuhn, 1970), but are also representative of a selective tradition. Thus a critiquing of the present includes more than just an historical analysis of the present as an ongoing, although changeable past, as Foucault suggests. It also becomes clear that our standards for making such judgments are also part of this historical fabric and therefore warrant the same critical attitude and are amenable to the same discourse analysis we have already suggested. Drawing on Bernstein's premise that we have to have meaningful encounters with the "other" in order to expose our own prejudgments, we propose that part of our critique of the present has to be an examination of the selective traditions that have produced the present. In other words, following Williams, we argue that through historical analysis, specifically in a genealogical manner, we have to identify the hegemonic structures of thought and practice and then through discourse analysis we can reveal the other to challenge the selective traditions of our current practices. That is, we have to make apparent the selective tradition in order to see that the other, although silent (silenced?), is also available and from there move to reasonable public debate of what we have been, are, and are becoming. Thus not only is our historical presence revealed but so are the standards by which we can judge the present and the past.

For example, Knowles' overall contributions to adult education personify a characteristic selective reading of the past to extoll a culture of individualism through the facilitation of individual growth and development. In a very similar manner, much contemporary literacy education theory and practice seems to be part of a selective tradition of adult education (de Castell & Luke, 1987) that is directly tied to Habermas' notion of technical rationality whose purpose is control which in turn is directly related to increasing economic productivity (Melichar, 1993). The work of Chisman (1989) is a case in point both for general literacy and in particular for workplace literacy. Functional literacy (the label itself is indicative of the selective tradition) is defined in terms of a lack of skills needed to be competent or to function adequately in modern society. It is significant that this is defined from an individual perspective, for by stressing the individual, the skills definition is consistent with the selective tradition of liberal democracy and the achievement principle upon which modern capitalist society is based (Melichar, 1993). Thus achievement is meritorious: success or failure is



based on what the individual can do which means the individual is largely responsible for his/her success or failure. This links directly to the deficiency mode of literacy education where individual solutions are sought for social problems.

Such extolling of individualism exemplifies how this selective tradition carries with it the conservative reverence of a past that is used to justify the present. It is a Burkean notion of tradition which allows for social change as long as it is gradual and nondisruptive. Such a tradition clearly operates to exclude both the present workings and the historical memory of collectivist and socio-structural change adult educators (see, e.g., Cunningham, 1989; Zacharakis-Jutz & Schied, 1993). In seeking to acknowledge the multiplicity of practices, we want to directly challenge and overcome the dominant selective tradition by exposing its ideological structures that perpetuate its continuance. Thus it is through genealogical history that we can get at the deep structure that operates behind the backs of people, that we can get at the selective traditions that serve dominant interests in an exclusionary fashion. As Apple (1990) points out, which knowledge and skills are deemed most worthy needs to be related to other social institutions and it is necessary to probe further by asking who benefits from having them. This leads us to ask questions about power relations in society and how adult education is used to maintain the dominant power relations centering around class, gender, and ethnic/racial divisions. Drawing upon Williams and Benjamin, we argue that there is not a single tradition, but rather that there are many traditions or "counter memories" which we can construct by conducting relational analyses of the social, cultural, and historical elements of practice.

#### HISTORY AS COUNTER-HEGEMONIC PRACTICE: THE MOVEMENT IN CRITIQUE

In rejecting traditional historiography, with its concern with gathering facts and getting the story correct in a progressive or linear pattern, we strongly share Marshall's position:

History in the postmodern moment becomes histories and questions. It asks: Whose history gets told? In whose name? For what purpose? Postmodernism is about histories not told, retold, untold. History as it never was. Histories forgotten, hidden, invisible, considered unimportant, changed, eradicated. It's about the refusal to see history as linear, as leading straight up to today in some recognizable pattern--all set for us to make sense of. It's about chance. It's about power. It's about information. And more information. And more. And... (1992, p. 4)

In response to his own questions, Welton (1993) argues that history is usable as providing "a critical vantage point on the present," developing a critical tradition, and generating "critical theorems." In this essay we have begun to build toward a critical theory of our relations to history. We have been exploring a way of challenging the prejudices we inherit from the past by appealing to history to serve a critical function (Bernstein, 1992). It is a use of history as genealogical unmasking where we become aware of the historical contingencies that shape what we frequently take to be intuitive and self-evident. Foucault (1972) has argued that in opposition to the "old" history that sought continuity, the "new" history speaks of series, divisions, and limits in terms of what forms of relations may be legitimately described. History is therefore relational and constitutive rather than a memorializing of the monuments of the past to justify a selective present. Following this lead, we conceptualize the present as an ongoing past which suggests that our current educational practices are historically-evolving (not transcendental) and therefore amenable to change through reasonable public debate. Such debate is centered on coming to know how tradition informs our actions and thoughts and being critical of it; it is debate in which we argue for what we believe to be true with an openness to critique. It directly rejects appeals to tradition for validating claims of inherited authority (Bernstein, 1992). Thus we believe that such a project has to be constantly concerned with questioning the unquestioned. Our central argument is that to break out of the present requires a radical interpretation of the past. We see the "doing" of history as a way of challenging the power of selective understandings of the past in substantiating current educational practices.



By looking "backward" we actually are thrust "forward" in our understanding of what we do as educators and why we do it. Therefore, within the present postmodern social context, we use our thesis of history as critique in an attempt to enliven the idea of tradition and thus rescue it from its restrictive and exclusionary use by conservatives. Thus we specifically propose that the critique of selective traditions and the historical reconstructions of genealogies are essential to a counterhegemonic adult education practice which directly challenges the dominant culture and provides progressive or emancipatory alternative practices to selective traditions. By bringing in counter traditions and thereby challenging the dominance of selective traditions, we are rescuing the past from the historiography of the present. By rejecting the direct linkage of history with the past (Jenkins, 1991), we are claiming that history is a discourse about the past; history is not the past in the sense that everything is history, rather everything is the past about which there are histories (Marshall, 1992). Instead of forgetting the past, as selective traditions force us to do, we seek to re-member the past in order to critique the present so that we can attain the not yet in the future (Held, 1980).

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**AN ORAL HISTORY OF WORKERS' EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA'S  
ANTHRACITE COAL MINING REGION:  
MIN MATHESON AND THE ILGWU**

by  
Ken Wolensky

**ABSTRACT**

Min Matheson led a grass roots workers' education movement for the ILGWU in Pennsylvania's coal region from 1944 to 1963. Part of her story is told here utilizing oral history to provide insight as to the history of adult education and social change.

During the early to mid-20th century coal barons largely controlled the economy of northeastern Pennsylvania. American industrialization began in this 500 square mile region of the northern Appalachian mountains with its enormous deposits of Anthracite or hard coal. Mining towns emerged throughout the region and drew waves of immigrants who supplied cheap labor to mine owners.

Following several decades of meeting the country's growing demands for coal, the region's economy began a downward spiral in the 1920s and completely collapsed in the 1950s largely due to labor-management conflict and growing competition from alternative energy sources. With few employment alternatives, thousands of struggling mining families turned to permanent out-migration, long distance commuting and employment by mothers and daughters in the growing regional garment manufacturing industry. Many garment shops began to emerge in the region; attracted by a large pool of cheap female labor willing to work for low wages in poor conditions to support desperate families.

Upon assuming the presidency of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in 1932, David Dubinsky set out to organize garment manufacturing shops in northeastern Pennsylvania. This would be no easy task as several shops were thought to be owned or influenced by organized crime especially in Pittston, a coal town in the Wyoming Valley.

In 1944 Dubinsky charged the organizing task to Minnie (Min) Lurye Matheson. Born in 1909 to an immigrant Russian-Jewish family, Matheson's youth was immersed in socialist labor culture as her father headed the Chicago Cigar Makers Union. Later in life she would become involved in the labor

movement as a garment worker and organizer for the ILGWU in New York City. Her efforts at organizing northeastern Pennsylvania garment workers were captured via audio-taped oral history interviews on three occasions during the 1980s. This paper presents part of the oral history of Matheson's efforts and demonstrates workers' education at the grass roots which challenged traditional power relationships in the local garment industry.

#### **Hegemony and Women Garment Workers' in Pittston**

Pittston was attractive to garment factory owners, particularly those from outside of the area. As Matheson described the situation . . .

"All the mines were down, men weren't working. We organized in New York and surrounding areas. The wages were getting higher. Piece rates were better and employers were looking for low wages and areas where they could produce garments at the lowest level possible so they went to the coal fields of Pennsylvania. At that time, well, there had been things happening [with organized crime]...the big shots in New York, the Genoveses and Albert Anastasia, were having their legal problems. So they wanted a legal front for their illicit activities, which included everything. They had really set up a center in Pittston that had the most beautiful girls, you know, little dark-haired Italian girls. Prostitution was rampant. Whatever they were doing to entice these girls or to get them or push them into it. So now they needed a legal front and the dress industry was easy. You need very little capital and all you have to do is have a handful of machines and you're in business. And all these manufacturers in New York who were looking for cheap labor outlets loved it. Work was coming in plentifully and these shops were growing, mushrooming".

As Matheson studied the situation she was struck by factory owner hegemony and the powerlessness of women;

"The atmosphere in the town was that everything was controlled and the women had no say at all. They did the cooking and the sewing and taking care of the lunches and getting the men out to work in the mines and the kids out to school. They were active in their churches, always crocheting and knitting and making things. Many went to work in garment factories. This was their life. They (shop owners) told the women, for example, 'We'll teach you to sew'. They worked for weeks for nothing. And the hours!

You know there were (labor) laws in the land but they weren't carrying out any of the laws. They did what they wished and made it easy for the women to come in any time of the day or night. Double, triple shifts.

"I'd talk to the women at meetings. And the first thing is, 'Are you registered to vote?' Yes, they're registered to vote but they don't vote. 'Why don't you vote? Do you go down and vote?' 'Well, we do, we go down and we register but we can't cast our vote. Our man has to cast our vote for us'. I asked why? 'Well, that's the system'. That's the system which the Mafia had ordained to control the elections. The women would go in and sign as citizens but then the man (husband or other male, possibly a shop owner) would go in the polling place and cast their vote. The women were never allowed to vote".

The position of women in the community seemingly motivated Matheson to work all the harder yielding impressive results. When she began organizing she could count 650 union members in six shops. By the time of her departure in 1963, the Wyoming Valley District consisted of 168 shops in three locals with a total of 11,000 members, many located in Pittston. How did she mobilize so many women in the face of powerlessness?

#### **Counter-Hegemony: Organizing and Building an ILGWU Community**

According to Matheson, attaining these results first required bringing as many women to the union cause as possible and, second, building an ILGWU community to support the work and non-work lives of members.

To Matheson, organizing was much more than simply increasing the enrollment of union members. Rather, it was a struggle which served an educational purpose to enhance workers' understanding of power relationships and how solidarity might be used to challenge hegemony. Involving workers in organizing, tapping into their strengths and social roles played a key role against difficult odds;

"We'd go into Pittston and the police would put us back on the train and tell us, 'You're not wanted here'. So we started coming in by car 'cause they used to watch that little railway station to see if we were coming. One time we were going down to a very early morning picket line and there, on the corner, were all these tough guys. We were



outnumbered. And I said, 'We have to think of something spectacular to worry them like they think they're worrying us.' We were scared. I don't want to make you think that we were so brave; we were scared. We didn't have much time to talk because they saw our car coming up on their side of the street in order to stop in front of the factory. If they were going to get tough and come across and beat us up or do something rotten, really rotten, then we wanted people to know about it. So the minute we got out of the car we all were screaming. I said, 'You rotten hoodlums! What are you doing in this town? You don't live here. We live here. This is our town not yours and you do one little thing to hurt these women...' 'cause I was their leader. But in the meantime all the other girls were screaming at them. Screaming! Pretty soon windows were opening and people were putting their heads out. I said, 'There are witnesses to anything you think you are going to do.' And, honestly, these men almost went crazy. It was like, my God, how can you do anything with a bunch of crazy women like that? They were walking around, waving their hands, putting their hands over their ears. And not a squeak out of them. Nothing. You see? When we first saw them they were making like in the moving pictures. Real tough guys. They were going to knock our heads off and we were not so sure they didn't have guns. We didn't know what they were going to do because they were adamant that they wouldn't let the union into Pittston. So I always said that the women defeated them".

Matheson pioneered another organizing tool, one that became crucial in garnering community support and keeping members informed: radio. She became a regular on local airways, especially during strikes and organizing drives.

"[Local radio announcer] 'Little Bill' Phillips used to say that the biggest audience in Wyoming Valley was when Min goes on, and that was true. When we were going to make a fight I went on the air the night before and I said, 'I hope everyone in Pittston is listening because this is what we're going to do'. And I spelled out exactly what we were gonna do. And people listened".

As the Wyoming Valley District grew to become one of the larger garment centers in the country, Matheson turned attention to the quality of members' non-work lives. She envisioned the union becoming more than just a pay and benefits organization but a community within itself which provided opportunities for learning, improved health care and family support to the growing membership.

Formal, non-formal and informal learning became a primary goal of the union. The district began a monthly newsletter, "Needlepoint", complete with photos, a message from Matheson, union news, and articles to enhance members' understanding of social, political, economic, and union issues. "Needlepoint" was a particularly important educational tool prior to local, state and national political elections as it served as a forum for candidate interviews, advocacy of a pro-labor political agenda and endorsement of pro-labor (usually Democratic) politicians.

Worker interest in formal education resulted in union sponsored, liberal arts evening classes at Wilkes College (now Wilkes University). History, economics, labor history and other courses were available to garment workers who would not have otherwise attended college;

"We had classes here too, you know. I asked Dr. Rosenberg and Gene Farley [economics professor and President of Wilkes College, respectively] if they would hold classes for our people at Wilkes. They thought it was a great idea. I thought it was a great idea because, to me, college was something none of us could afford in our years and to be able to say that we're going to school at Wilkes was a real feather in our cap. So they set up classes for us. And the women loved it. We kept that going for quite a long time. We got certificates and we had graduation and so on".

A highly successful musical chorus, consisting of local male and female union members, bolstered morale, provided a needed social outlet and became another vehicle to promote learning among garment workers. The chorus pioneered several songs, skits and other types of entertainment which often reflected a political, pro-labor message. As it grew in size and popularity under Matheson's leadership, the chorus was frequently invited to perform at local and state-wide political functions (usually involving the Democratic party), holiday parties, Labor Day parades and other events.

As illness, disease and on-the-job injury soared during the post World War II era in the Wyoming Valley, Matheson saw a need to establish a union sponsored health center. The center had two goals. First, to treat disease, illness and injury, and, second, to educate members and their families regarding disease prevention, job safety, exercise and immunization. The union health center opened in Wilkes-Barre in 1948.

In sum, once organized, the Wyoming Valley district of the ILGWU became a community of sorts. It promoted various opportunities for learning, provided health care, emerged as an advocate for the rights of labor and provided a source of security in a changing and uncertain world.

### Conclusion

After sheparding the Wyoming Valley District for nearly twenty years, Min Matheson departed in 1963 for an assignment in New York City. She retired to the valley in the early 1970s and remained there until her death in December, 1993. To the end of her life she remained strongly committed to the labor movement and maintained vivid memories of the struggles and victories of women garment workers' in Pennsylvania's Anthracite coal region. While a mere glimpse of these struggles and victories are provided here, Matheson's work demonstrates a broader historical example of grass roots workers' education.

To Matheson workers' education involved much more than learning to negotiate a contract or process a grievance. To her, the role of workers' education was to enhance garment workers' understanding of injustice, inherent community power relationships and ways in which traditionally accepted inequities could be challenged. Organizing was a learning resource which enhanced commitment to the union's cause, directly challenged hegemony, provided a voice for the powerless and aided in building worker self-esteem.

As organizing successes mounted, Matheson's sought to meet the growing life needs of ILGWU members. Thus, workers' education meant not only learning about and fighting injustice, but building a community to which garment workers' and their families could belong; a community through which human needs (physical, social and psychological) could be met.

In summary, the story of Min Matheson and the ILGWU in northeastern Pennsylvania is a story rooted in a radical, humanist tradition familiar to adult education. Not unlike Myles Horton and Highlander, Matheson and the ILGWU contributes much to our understanding of the history of workers' education and adult education for social change.

## AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF HOULE'S TYPOLOGY OF PROFESSIONALS

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**Abstract** The purpose of this study was to test Houle's typology of professional practitioners and its relationships with their demographic characteristics and their participation in CPE.

A central problem for continuing educators has been to gain a better understanding of why professionals seek to learn through continuing professional education (CPE). In order to address this question, Houle (1980) proposed a typology of professionals which he derived from Rogers and Shoemaker's (1971) work in the adoption of innovations. Houle proposed that there are four groups of practitioners (innovators, pacesetters, middle majority, and laggards) whose characteristics are linked to their zest and effort to acquire mastery or competence. Although this typology offers continuing educators a way of conceptualizing their audience, no empirical study has been conducted to examine this hypothesis and little is known about the relationship between this typology and practitioners' participation in CPE. Three objectives guided the study: (1) to investigate, through disjoint cluster analysis, types of practitioners based upon their attitudes toward and experience in CPE, perceived expectations of significant others, and personal obligation of participation in CPE; (2) to discover the association between the professional typology and their socio-demographic characteristics; (3) to determine the relationship between the professional types revealed at the first stage and their participation in future CPE programs.

### Design

The study was originally designed to investigate prospectively veterinary practitioners' attitudes toward an organized CPE program and the relationship of these attitudes with participation in CPE (Yang, Blunt, & Butler, 1994). The CPE program selected was the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, Canada) annual conference. There are no mandatory CPE requirements in Alberta and participation in the AVMA annual conference was entirely voluntary. The conference is the most comprehensive organized CPE program provided by the association for its members and covers a wide range of veterinary subjects. The major theme always focuses on recent advances in related topics and thus the annual conference is a typical update model of CPE. The population of the study consisted of all registered members of AVMA who were identified as practicing veterinarians. Honor or life members were eliminated from the survey population since they were no longer active practitioners. Employees of governments, universities, colleges, and industries were excluded as Houle (1980) suggests that they generally serve as facilitators in CPE activity. A total number of 551 veterinarians satisfied the requirements and served as the study population. Mail questionnaires were used to collect professionals' attitudinal information and demographic data. A response rate of 63% was achieved between two weeks and one month prior to the 1992 conference. Bias estimation procedures indicated that the demographics of the sample provided a satisfactory match to the total population with exception that females were slightly over represented among the respondents. Practitioners' attendance in 1992 and 1993 AVMA conferences were obtained by checking the conference registration lists.

### Measurement and Data Analysis

In order to discover whether the practicing professionals in fact form groups in the manner hypothesized by Houle (1980), it was necessary to operationalize the attribute variables that distinguish the practitioners. According to Houle, groups of professionals are distinct "in terms of their dominant attitudes toward their professional practice and then in terms of how those attitudes influence the nature and amount of educational participation they undertake" (1980, pp. 155-156). Therefore, professionals can be classified in certain respects. First, professionals can differ in terms of their attitudes toward adoption of new professional knowledge and skills. Practitioners' attitudes toward adoption of new knowledge and skills was measured by asking respondents to express their attitudes toward the act of registering in the



CPE program, which is basically a means of disseminating advanced professional knowledge and skills. A semantic differential measure was used to assess this attitude. Eight 7-point semantic differential items were selected, including the following paired adjectives: interesting-boring, important-trivial, valuable-worthless, pleasing-annoying, positive-negative, beneficial-detrimental, affordable-costly, and good-bad. Reliability coefficient alpha for this scale was 0.92. Second, there may be different expectations about whether practitioners should participate in CPE. For example, Houle points out that innovators make enemies of those who do not want to change, while laggards usually cause deep concern to other fellow practitioners. Measurement of the expectation by significant others about the participation in CPE consisted of four items, each assessing the normative beliefs of influential referent group (clients, colleagues, fellow professionals, and family) in regard to the participation. These four normative beliefs were measured on 7-point Likert scale and the reliability coefficient alpha was 0.79. Third, practitioners are distinguished in terms of their personal obligations to participate in organized educational activity. Houle assumes that innovators and pacesetters feel a strong need to participate in group learning endeavors and the laggards reluctantly take part in these activities. Personal normative belief was evaluated as a product of the personal belief of obligation to participate in CPE program and the motivation to comply with this obligation. Finally, the amount of educational participation differs across the practitioners as a result of their attitudes toward adoption of new knowledge and skills. Previous experience in the CPE programs was determined by a ratio of the previous number of times the respondents had participated in the past five years over the possible numbers of opportunities to attend since joining the association.

Several demographic variables were also included in the survey, including age, annual income from veterinary practice, gender, level of employment position (from locum, solo practitioner, to employee, partner, and principal of group practice), practice situation (full-time vs. part-time), length of the practitioners received their professional degrees, the date the respondents joined the association, professional and social activities such as publications and service in professional and community.

The data analysis was performed in accordance with three research questions. First, to test Houle's typology of professional practitioners the data were submitted to the SPSS cluster analysis procedure based on four attribute variables (attitude, social expectation, personal norm, and previous participation). The four attribute variables were standardized and the cluster analysis was implemented based on z-scores. The distance among respondents were calculated by squared Euclidean distance in four dimension space associated with the four attribute variables. Numerous cluster solutions (7 clustering methods provided by SPSS with 3, 4, 5 cluster solutions) were requested and examined. Considerations in selecting a final solution were given to statistical properties and Houle's theoretical propositions as well. Ultimately, a four cluster solution with complete linkage method was selected as it revealed the most parsimonious and interpretable results. After the four cluster solution was selected, each cluster was then labeled as innovators, pacesetters, middle majority, and laggards respectively according to their interpretations on the four attribute variables. Second, means or frequencies of demographic variables were computed for each type of practitioners based on the cluster solution in the first stage. Third, two logistic regression analyses were performed to assess the relationship between the variable of practitioners' typology and participation behavior in 1992 and 1993 AVMA CPE programs separately. Respondents were coded as participants and non-participants in each of the programs and were also classified as one of the four typologies.

### Results

The results of the cluster presented in Figure 1. Each type of practitioners was then described in regard to their demographic variables. Table 1 shows the total sample and the four types of practitioners in terms of demographics.

**Innovators.** The major characteristics of the innovators are consistent with Houle's description. They only account 4.7% of the total valid sample. They possessed highest positive attitude toward the CPE program and second highest personal norm in regard to participation. Nevertheless, they had lowest expectation from significant others about the participation. This

is, perhaps, due to the fact that they move more quickly in professional development than professional colleagues. Understandingly, their average participation time in the CPE programs was the highest (4 times out of seven years) among the four types of practitioners. Innovators tended to be little older, and correspondingly have longer time in practice and affiliated with the association than other three types of veterinarians. However, the overall demographic differences among four types of veterinarians in terms of age, gender, years received the professional degree, and length in the professional association were not significant. All innovators reported they were working as full-time practitioners and they tended to work in group settings. A majority of them were working either as partners or principals of group practices. One of the major differences between innovators and other groups can be found in their active professional and community services. About two thirds of innovators had served as officials in professional organization and nearly 60% of them had chaired professional meetings or conferences during past five years. Generally, they got above average income from the professional practice but more than half (54.5%) of them received an average income.

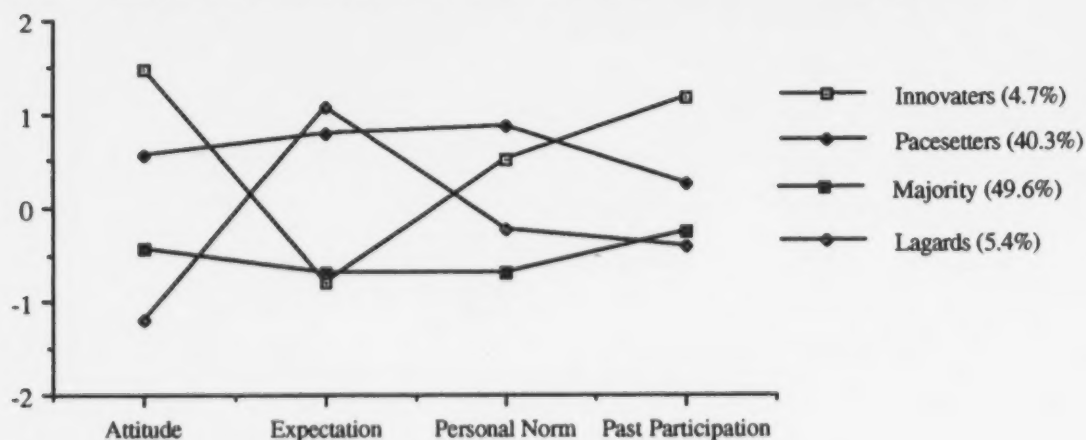


Figure 1.  
Types of Practitioners Based on Four Attribute Variables (in Z-score)

**Pacesetters.** There were more pacesetters in this sample (40%) than that suggested by Houle's typology. The fact that pacesetters were overly represented in the survey maybe caused by their willingness to involve CPE study. Thus, more responses were obtained from this group than that from the majority of the population. Fortunately, over represented sample size of pacesetters did not deter our understanding of their major characteristics. Pacesetters showed the second highest positive attitudes toward and participation experience in CPE programs. Besides the attitude and experience in continuing education, they are different from innovators in the sense that they perceived a much higher expectation by others about the participation in CPE. The most distinguished characteristic of the pacesetters was their personal norms. They reported highest obligations to participation in continuing education activity among the four groups of professionals. No significant demographic differences were found between the pacesetters and the total sample. Also, there were no significant differences in terms of their professional practice, income, participation in professional and social activities. Out of the 7 possible times, pacesetters had average participation time of 2.5 in the CPE programs, which was significantly higher than the overall sample (1.8). These major characteristics of the pacesetters leads to the conclusion that pacesetters' participation in the CPE was largely influenced by social norms and the perceive importance of lifelong education.

**Middle Majority.** This sample of veterinarians had fewer people classified in the middle majority (50%) than suggested by Houle's typology. There were no significant differences between this group and total sample in terms of demographic characteristics, professional

practice, and income. They showed less participation in professional and social activities. Overall, they showed opposite characteristics to the pacesetters. They had low personal norm and social expectation to participate in the CPE program. Their attitude toward the CPE program was not favorable and they had less frequency in continuing education participation but participated more than laggards

Table 1  
Demographic Characteristics for Four Types of Practitioners

| Variables                                        | Sample | Types of Practitioners |             |          |          |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------|-------------|----------|----------|
|                                                  |        | Innovators             | Pacesetters | Majority | Laggards |
| Number                                           | 278    | 13                     | 112         | 138      | 15       |
| Percentage of Sample                             | 100%   | 4.7%                   | 40.3%       | 49.6%    | 5.4%     |
| Demographics                                     |        |                        |             |          |          |
| Mean age                                         | 39     | 43                     | 40          | 38       | 40       |
| Female                                           | 37.2%  | 33.3%                  | 32.4%       | 41.0%    | 40.0%    |
| Mean years got degree                            | 13     | 16                     | 14          | 12       | 14       |
| Mean length in AVMA                              | 12     | 15                     | 12          | 10       | 11       |
| Professional practice                            |        |                        |             |          |          |
| Part-time                                        | 14.9%  | 0%                     | 15.6%       | 15.0%    | 20.0%    |
| Employment positions                             |        |                        |             |          |          |
| Principal of group                               | 14.4%  | 16.7%                  | 16.5%       | 12.6%    | 13.3%    |
| Partner of group                                 | 25.5%  | 41.7%                  | 22.9%       | 26.7%    | 20.0%    |
| Employee of group                                | 32.1%  | 25.0%                  | 31.2%       | 34.1%    | 26.7%    |
| Solo practice                                    | 15.1%  | 16.7%                  | 16.5%       | 12.6%    | 26.7%    |
| Locum                                            | 12.9%  | 0%                     | 12.8%       | 14.1%    | 13.3%    |
| Educational and Social Participation             |        |                        |             |          |          |
| Mean Participation times during 7 years          | 1.8    | 4.0                    | 2.5         | 1.1      | 1.0      |
| Chaired professional meeting in past 5 years     | 17.8%  | 58.3%                  | 16.5%       | 13.7%    | 26.7%    |
| Severed as official in professional organization | 34.3%  | 66.7%                  | 38.5%       | 28.8%    | 26.7%    |
| Severed on community board                       | 22.0%  | 25.0%                  | 24.1%       | 19.5%    | 26.7%    |
| Severed on any other community service           | 52.0%  | 75.0%                  | 56.0%       | 47.4%    | 26.7%    |
| Annual Income                                    |        |                        |             |          |          |
| < 25,000                                         | 13.5%  | 9.1%                   | 11.7%       | 15.3%    | 14.3%    |
| 25,000-45,000                                    | 35.5%  | 9.1%                   | 37.9%       | 37.4%    | 21.4%    |
| 45,000-65,000                                    | 23.6%  | 54.5%                  | 21.4%       | 23.7%    | 14.3%    |
| 65,000-85,000                                    | 17.0%  | 18.2%                  | 17.5%       | 13.0%    | 50.0%    |
| >85,000                                          | 10.4%  | 9.1%                   | 11.7%       | 10.7%    | 0%       |

**Laggards.** As was anticipated, laggards were a small proportion of the sample (5.4%). They reported least positive attitude and least participation frequency in the CPE programs. During the 7 year period investigated, the average participation of this group in the CPE programs was only 1. Nevertheless, they had highest social expectation and moderate personal obligation to participate in the CPE program among the four groups. In other words, laggards caused concerns from people in work place (clients, colleagues, and fellow professionals) and

family members and they were persuaded to participate in continuing education by these people. It was very interesting to find that laggards had higher personal obligation to participate than the majority. This finding may be interpreted as the impact of urging by significant others. With respect to demographic variables, laggards failed to show significant difference from the total sample. In professional practice, they tended to have less commitment to professional practice (i.e., more part-time base, more worked as solo or locum). They did not show any less social and professional participation than the majority except for participation in CPE programs. About half of the respondents reported middle-high level of income.

To further test the validity of the typology revealed in the previous cluster analysis, logistic regression was used to predict participation group membership based on the variables of typology. The results of logistic regression analysis were compared the prediction based on the four attribute variables (Table 2). The typology predicted the participation in 1992 CPE program as correctly as the prediction by multiple discriminant analysis based on the four attitude variables. However, the typology improved substantially the prediction for the 1993 program. The actual participation in 1992 and 1993 CPE programs across four professional groups confirmed that innovators were those most likely to participate, followed by pacesetter, while majority and laggards were least likely to participate. Nevertheless, a greater proportion of the laggards participated in the two programs than that of majority, contrary to our anticipation. This was probably due to the fact that laggards accounted small number of total sample (N=15) and thus classification of this group is relatively unstable. Overall, the typology of professional practitioners revealed in the study showed a more stable and accurate prediction for future participation in CPE than the prediction based on four attribute variables. This result suggests that Houle's typology of professionals offers a parsimonious explanation of participation in CPE.

Table 2  
Prediction of Participation in CPE Based on Houle's Typology and Attribute Variables

| Group       | 1992 CPE Program     |                                    |                                     | 1993 CPE Program     |                                    |                                     |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|             | Actual Participation | Predicted correctly by 4 variables | Predicted correctly by the typology | Actual Participation | Predicted correctly by 4 variables | Predicted correctly by the typology |
| Laggards    | 20.0%                | 73.3%                              | 80.0%                               | 13.3%                | 40.0%                              | 86.7%                               |
| Majority    | 12.3%                | 44.2%                              | 87.7%                               | 8.7%                 | 13.0%                              | 91.3%                               |
| Pacesetters | 58.0%                | 64.3%                              | 58.0%                               | 28.6%                | 51.7%                              | 71.4%                               |
| Innovators  | 76.9%                | 92.3%                              | 76.9%                               | 30.8%                | 69.2%                              | 69.2%                               |
| Total       | 34.2%                | 75.5%                              | 74.8%                               | 18.0%                | 50.5%                              | 82.0%                               |

### Discussion

The results of this study provide strong support for Houle's typology of professional practitioners. Practitioners can be distinguished as innovators, pacesetters, middle majority, and laggards according to their present attitude to and previous experience in continuing education, perceived expectations to participation by significant others and personal obligation. Innovators and pacesetters showed the most favorable attitude and personal obligation to learn new professional knowledge and skills, and they have participated in CPE extensively. Innovators and pacesetters differ from each other since innovators had more positive attitude and engaged in CPE more frequently. Also, innovators reported fewer social expectations to participation while pacesetters indicated much higher social expectations. On the contrary, the middle majority and laggards expressed less favorable attitudes and personal obligations to participate in CPE and showed less frequent participation in CPE program. Nevertheless, the results of the study indicate that laggards expressed little more positive personal obligation and extremely high social expectation to participation in CPE programs. The results may reflect the current social pressure on those professionals who reluctantly participate in CPE.

The typology of practitioners offers additional insight to the differences among practitioners beyond the attitudinal information and previous participation experience in CPE.



Practitioners can be better understood by examining the relationship between the typology and their demographics as well as professional characteristics. There are no significant demographic differences between laggards and the middle majority. The laggards had been actively involved in some professional and social activities such as chairing professional meetings and serving on public board, but showed less commitment to the professional practice although they had above average income from the practice. It was the negative attitude that deterred their participation in CPE. Although this group of practitioners indicated heavy social pressure or expectations to participate in organized CPE programs, they generally perceived their way of life as acceptable and did not perceive benefiting from CPE. Similar comparisons between pacesetter and the majority also reveal important differences. The pacesetters are quite similar to the majority in terms of demographics, professional practice status, and income from the practice. However, the pacesetters were actively involved in professional and social activities. They had favorable attitudes, social expectations and personal obligations to participate in CPE. Their attitudes toward the CPE program were not as high as those of innovators, which implies that they may not be as likely to try innovative practice. Consequently, the pacesetters participated in CPE program more frequently than the majority but less than the innovators.

The results of the cluster analysis and the above discussion has implications for both theory and practice of continuing education for professionals. From the perspective of research and theory building, the typology confirmed in this study provides a parsimonious framework for understanding professional practitioners. While the respondents' demographic characteristics were found to interact with attitudinal variables (i.e., attitude, social expectation, and personal obligation) and resulted in an interpretable framework, such a framework may not hold across professions or other modes of continuing professional education. Similar studies across the professions are needed in future to provide better understanding of professionals' common characteristics. Further research is also necessary with the inquiry to other continuing professional learning modes than the organized CPE program.

From the perspective of continuing educators, the professional practitioners typology provides a useful analysis of market segmentation for their organized CPE programs. First, a positive attitude toward CPE seems to be critical in determining professionals' participation and their support of organized CPE program. Second, continuing education program planners should consider the social influences on their potential learners. This study shows that practitioners' personal beliefs are dominant factors in regard to the participation in an organized CPE program, while their appreciation of other significant people's beliefs influence participation moderately. This finding may be assumed to be true for other professionals in private practice. However, the influence of other people may be more important for professionals practice within hierarchical settings, especially for those professions in which collaboration among practitioners is the norm. In either case, strategies that minimize negative and unfavorable social expectations for the practitioners are needed by the continuing educators. Third, professionals' personal belief about the obligation to participate should be taken into account in developing effective CPE program. This personal normative belief reflects professionals' perception about the value and importance of lifelong education. This study indicates that perceived obligation to participation in CPE is critical to those professionals labeled as majority and laggards.

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## PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POPULAR EDUCATION

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### Abstract

In 1991, Lindeman Center staff began working with ten United Way agencies in the Rockford, Illinois, area to develop an evaluation approach that enhanced their capacity for self-directed decision making. Through a collaborative process, the participating agencies decided to experiment with the participatory evaluation approach. This paper discusses this project within the framework of North American of popular education.

### Introduction

In 1991, several community education centers in northern Illinois were confronted by their primary funder, Rock River Valley United Way Services, Inc., to develop an evaluation approach that would measure the effectiveness of their programs. Lindeman Center staff, together with representatives from several nonprofit organizations, United Way staff and selected volunteers, analyzed several evaluation strategies. After careful review, this planning group decided to launch a pilot program where ten agencies would experiment with participatory evaluation, utilizing material available through the International Participatory Research Network, the International Council for Adult Education and the Society for Participatory Research in Asia.<sup>1</sup>

Ten United Way, nonprofit agencies volunteered for this pilot project. Each agency organized an evaluation team with representatives from the staff, board of directors, volunteers, and most importantly the people who used and benefited from its programming. Then each evaluation team developed and implemented its own evaluation process including the focus, the data-gathering instrument, data analysis and synthesis, final recommendations, and action plan. Participating agencies included several urban community education centers in low-income or working-class neighborhoods, a regional literacy council, a homeless shelter, a rural senior-citizen's center, a drop-in center for mentally ill adults, and several crises centers. Although the evaluations differed in both substance and structure, in each one lay people, not professionally trained evaluators, controlled every step of the evaluation process. As a result, they became the "experts" in this knowledge development process.

Using this project as a case study, this research undertakes a critical analysis of participatory evaluation within the North American context of popular education. Popular education has its epistemological roots in the revolutionary milieu of the "Third World." Its philosophical underpinnings are seeped in class analysis and critical theory. It is often described as an educational process that promotes social change through knowledge production by marginalized groups and communities. The mission statement of the recently organized North American Popular Educators states that its purpose is to revitalize democratic participation through a re-invigorated citizenry that learns to become "critically reflective through dialogue on

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<sup>1</sup> The primary document used was the Report on the International Forum on Participatory Evaluation, New Delhi, India, in 1988. Although the report has few references to North America, it helped the planning group generate new ideas on program evaluation, and provided the "theoretical" justification needed by United Way staff to commit resources to the project.

public issues and to take effective collective action to effect change in policies and practices inimical to freedom, democracy, social justice and human rights."<sup>2</sup> In an effort to bridge theory to practice, rhetoric to action, this project is presented as one practical application of popular education.

### Controlling One's Own Knowledge

As is often the case, the motivation to undertake program evaluation was spurred by United Way, the primary source of outside funding. In other words, the "purse strings" became the "stick" that dictated the timing of the evaluation. Such external forces do not usually create the best setting for participatory evaluation. Yet, in the world of nonprofit organizations, program evaluation often receives a low priority on an agenda where "fire fighting" and crises management are a way of life. Granted, there may be an occasional if not annual, half-day SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) exercise to develop a list of short- and long-term goals. But this should not be confused with a thorough evaluation. Typically, nonprofit staff are underpaid and overworked, and have limited flexibility to generate additional income from fundraising events—such as BINGO—or from individual memberships. This chaotic scenario is further complicated by the fact that communities are demanding more from local nonprofit agencies with increasing cutbacks in state and federal monies for communities.

In the defense of outside funding sources, such as United Way, they too are under increasing pressure to support various community initiatives. Throughout the United States, United Way supported agencies have been called upon to fill the void left by formerly-funded, government programs. For the most part, local United Ways depend upon corporate gifts, individual gifts, and employee giving campaigns in the workplace. Over the last few years, these revenues have declined, reflecting the deterioration of disposable personal income. As a result of this changing economic situation, funders and community leaders are demanding greater accountability from local nonprofit organizations. Questions, not previously asked, are being raised. Why is this program important to the community? How effectively and efficiently is this program achieving its goals? Who benefits and who is hurt by this program? How much community ownership and allegiance is there to this agency?

Historically, nonprofit organizations have had little pressure to conduct thorough program evaluations. Even though they understand why program evaluation is useful, they often have little experience in conducting one, nor are they necessarily clear on what the resulting benefits and risks might be. The whole notion of an evaluation is threatening as the nonprofit sector is heavily dependent upon outside funding. They also recognize that they might not be able to control the ramifications following an evaluation. As is often the case within a more traditional paradigm of evaluation, the people closest to the program do not have control of the evaluation during its design, implementation, data analysis, synthesis, and conclusions. So it is not surprising that the monster of fear is conjured up when the notion of program evaluation is raised.

When the representatives from the community education centers first approached us, they had resigned themselves to the fact that, yes, they would have to undertake program evaluation. Evaluation in and of itself was not perceived as a problem as everyone agreed that they should have been investing both time and resources on analyzing their programs years earlier. Their concern was "how do we control the evaluation?" And, "how will we ensure

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<sup>2</sup> Mission statement, *Wings of Change: Newsletter of the North American Educators of Adults for Democratic Social Change*, May 1990, Vol. 1, no. 1 p. 2. (This original name was later shortened to North American Popular Educators)

that our centers and our communities benefit from this experience?" These community people clearly understood the underlying issues of controlling one's own knowledge.

They were concerned with specific issues, including: (1) what problems might arise by grouping and comparing both "intervention" and "prevention" oriented programs; (2) will the evaluation hurt a particular agency's chances of retaining or increasing the current level of funding; (3) will participation in the evaluation process be mandatory or voluntary; (4) how much pressure will the outside funder, in this case United Way, place on a particular agency to conform to the funder's priorities for giving as a result of the evaluation; and (5) how can the voice of the community be genuinely included in the evaluation process? There were many fears and issues that had to be sorted out before an evaluation process could be agreed upon by both United Way and the participating agencies.

After meeting for three months, the evaluation planning group agreed to embark upon a new and untested approach to program evaluation, i.e., participatory evaluation. Surprisingly, United Way staff showed great flexibility in committing its resources to help ensure that this evaluation experiment would be successful. Everyone agreed that participation should be entirely voluntary. An agency's participation or non participation would have no effect upon their level of funding from United Way. In addition, the participating agencies would not be required to submit to United Way any of the raw data or even a comprehensive final report. All information and knowledge developed during the evaluation would be confidential and the sole property of the participating agency. This decision was made in order to promote honesty in the evaluation and prevent any manipulation of the data in order to "please" United Way.

For its part, United Way believed that it would reap benefits from this experimental project through voluntary program changes and adjustments agencies would hopefully make as a result of the evaluation. The unwritten message was: When given the chance to conduct an unencumbered evaluation with no strings attached, each participating agency would be moved to adopt an "action plan" at the conclusion of their evaluation out of a self-serving desire to improve their programming. United Way's trust in both its participating agencies and Lindeman Center staff was the key to this program's success.

### Beginning the Process

After the decision to pursue this project was made, an introductory workshop was developed to provide the basic information to all of United Way's forty-four agencies. Approximately one fourth of the agencies asked for follow-up on-site visits by Lindeman Center staff to discuss issues relating to participatory evaluation specific to their agency. Of these agencies, several decided against committing time and resources to this type of evaluation, several others decided that they would participate at a later date, and nine committed themselves to participating in the pilot phase. A tenth agency initially committed itself to the evaluation, but after realizing that participation, in and of itself, would not affect its level of funding from United Way, it quietly lost interest and dropped out. The motivation had to be internal as there were no external incentives to participate.

The evaluation process had to respect the needs and constraints of the people serving on the evaluation team. What was the best time for the volunteers to participate on the evaluation team? For example, the homeless shelter preferred conducting their evaluation in the winter, when people would be using their facilities and most likely participate. Next, an evaluation team had to be assembled. This, in many ways, was the most critical step in developing a successful evaluation. The composition of the evaluation team directly determines the focus of the evaluation. In every case, the people who used the agency or a particular program at the agency needed to be brought into the evaluation process as early as possible,



preferably when the evaluation focus was being determined and definitely before the evaluation design was developed. At the homeless shelter, the evaluation team was composed of eight residents and the staff director. The residents had the veto voice. At one community education center, the evaluation team included the executive director, a staff member, a mother whose children used the center, and another person who lived in the community but had little previous contact with the center. At a senior-citizens center, the team included six users and the director. At a mentally ill/homeless drop-in center, the evaluation team included several staff members and psychologist but was dominated by six "members," that is the people who used the center. And at a sexual assault crises center, the team included only staff and volunteers, as the identity of the "survivors" was confidential. Yet, the design of the evaluation included the voice of survivors although they never participated in any meetings.

Once the evaluation team was selected, the next step was to determine an evaluation focus. Although, the director, facilitator, and anyone else who helped select the team may have had a focus in mind, once the evaluation team was assembled it assumed responsibility for the evaluation focus. More than once, the evaluation focus changed after the team was in place. With the area literacy council, four two-hour meetings were needed by the evaluation team to negotiate the evaluation focus. Part of the problem, in this case, reflected the divergent pedagogical philosophies and approaches to literacy education. Yet, through this arduous process, the evaluation instrument began to take shape and reflect the concerns and interests of the various team members. With the senior-citizens center, the team decided that before they could determine a focus, they would have to discuss the problems of the center from their individual perspectives, then evaluate the agency's mission statement, by-laws and procedure manual. Only after this process did they agree upon a focus. In several cases, the agency's director stood steadfast in his or her decision on what the focus should be, believing that they were the one most accountable to the community. But in most cases, the evaluation focus reflected a negotiated process that was the first step to insuring that the evaluation team would assume full ownership of evaluation outcomes and the resulting "action plan."

Tailoring an evaluation instrument to the needs and personality of the agency was the responsibility of the evaluation team. In the case of the homeless shelter, several factors had to be considered: 1) the transient nature of the residents, and 2) the time of day where participation would be maximized. As a group, we decided to use a force field analysis approach. As an evaluation process, force field analysis can be completed in a relatively short period of time while maximizing participation. The first session was devoted to visioning how the ideal homeless shelter would be structured and administered. This was then contrasted to describing the shelter as it presently operated. In the next session, the evaluation team analyzed the positive and negative forces that would impact any strategy to move the operations of the shelter toward the ideal. This exercise grounded the participants in the realities of operating this type of shelter. As was true for every evaluation, an "action plan" for implementing the evaluation recommendations became the final document signifying that the evaluation was complete.

At the other end of the spectrum in terms of time and complexity was an evaluation developed with a community education center that served a town without a park district to provide educational and sports activities for adults and youth. The community was predominately working class with single dwelling homes and mobile home parks. The first part of the evaluation consisted of a general overview of the center's programs, its administrative structure, and the community. The purpose of this overview was to locate a focus for the evaluation. Then the question was raised, "how do we know if we are meeting the needs of the community?" This one question gave purpose to the evaluation, and the evaluation team quickly agreed to conduct a community needs assessment. Using a small evaluation team of four people--two staff members, one board member, and one community volunteer--they entered into what turned out to be a six month evaluation project. The primary assessment

instrument was a "stimulus question" crafted by the evaluation team and administered to fifteen focus groups, ranging from senior citizens to grade school children to business leaders using both written and verbal formats.

### Bridging Theory to Practice

These two case studies illustrate opposite ends of the spectrum of how participatory evaluation was used by the nine participating nonprofit organizations. For the most part, the resulting action plan have been followed. It is important to note that these evaluations did not always validate the status quo within these nonprofit organizations. In some instances problems were uncovered and structural or administrative issues had to be addressed before programmatic changes could be made. In one evaluation, the voice of the program "users" or benefactors became so strong, pointing out serious administrative problems, that the executive director and chairperson of the board of directors resigned.

Throughout the process, our role as outside facilitators was to advocate for the users of the nonprofit agency. Our challenge was to stimulate a broader vision of evaluation that went beyond the traditional paradigm. This was accomplished through dialogue between United Way and its member agencies. Clearly, the inherent power relation between the funding organization and its agencies could potentially override any genuine collaboration. Therefore, in visioning a new approach to evaluation, trust had to be developed--specifically, trust from the bottom-up, from the smallest nonprofit organization up to United Way's administrative staff. As outside facilitators, even though we made no decisions on who would participate on a particular team, we could have easily manipulated the process as "experts" in order to achieve our own "hidden" agenda. Our credibility was based in a long standing relationship with the community, and a history of being accountable. We were a known factor in this mix of personalities. We were up front with our biases, as well as our agenda. Could a facilitator with no history in the community have the same type of credibility? We are not sure. But we do know that the personality and style of the outside facilitator is a critical factor in the development of the evaluation team.

The key to building this collaborative environment during the project was the development of the notion that "everyday" people could design, coordinate, implement, and take full ownership of program evaluation without the help of a professional evaluation team. To emphasize this statement, as outside facilitators we viewed ourselves first and foremost as popular educators who have limited evaluation skills in contrast to "professional" evaluators. The tension that arises during an evaluation when the everyday people who use and are closest to the program become the evaluation experts highlights the inherent limitations of relying upon university-trained, professional evaluators to develop "unbiased" research. As outside facilitators, we often missed some of the most crucial issues that had to be addressed before the evaluation could be completed. This statement was beautifully illustrated during the evaluation of the mentally-ill drop-in center. The "members" who were on the evaluation team argued that the only way equality between staff and members could be achieved--even as team members within the course of the evaluation--would be if the rights of each member were first protected. Then, as a subcommittee of the evaluation team, they independently crafted a bill of rights for members and staff, negotiated the document through the evaluation team, and successfully had it added to the agency's by-laws.

A few conclusions reached during this project include: (1) Through participatory evaluation, community people can participate in social change activities that give them greater ownership of the social service agencies and programs that are intended to serve them; (2) community people need not be fluent in the theoretical jargon or understand research issues in

order to develop, implement, and analyze an effective program evaluation; and (3) the excitement of popular education in a non-revolutionary society such as in Canada and the United States can often be realized in those activities that promote greater citizen participation among people who seldom are encouraged to participate. The role of the outside facilitator is problematic and needs to be further analyzed and understood. The next step proposed for the Rockford project is to provide additional training to the participants in various evaluation techniques and approaches. Ultimately, they will be able to provide much of the technical expertise to future program evaluations with other agencies. By building local capacity, there would be less dependence upon the outside "expert" or facilitator, thereby strengthening the role of the program user and creating new opportunities for self-determination through program evaluation.

## SELF-DIRECTION IN ADULT LEARNING: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED AND WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Ralph G. Brockett, University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Rosemary S. Caffarella, University of Northern Colorado  
Lorraine A. Cavaliere, Penn State Great Valley  
Lucy M. Guglielmino, Florida Atlantic University  
Carol E. Kasworm, University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Huey B. Long, University of Oklahoma

### INTRODUCTION (Brockett)

Few research topics in adult education have received more attention than self-direction in learning. It has been nearly 25 years since Tough's (1979) original investigation of the learning projects undertaken by adults. This study, and the numerous replications using the learning projects methodology, offered to the field an understanding of the frequency and nature of learning projects that are self-planned. This line of inquiry served as a foundation for other branches of inquiry into the study of self-direction in learning. Together, these approaches have greatly enhanced our understanding of self-direction. At the same time, some critics have challenged the appropriateness of certain methodological approaches to studying self-direction, while other critics have advocated de-emphasizing this research direction altogether.

The purpose of this discussion is to examine research on self-direction in order to address the following questions: 1) How has previous work on self-direction contributed to the development of the future research agenda in this area? and 2) What are some of the promising direction for future research on self-direction? In order to accomplish this, brief discussions will be offered relative to qualitative methods of studying self-direction (Cavaliere), measurement of self-direction in learning (Guglielmino), and emerging theoretical perspectives that can contribute to the future research agenda (Caffarella). In addition, two responses to these developments will be provided (Kasworm and Long).

### SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING: CONTINUING THE RESEARCH AGENDA (Cavaliere)

Investigation of the phenomenon of self-directed learning as defined and researched in adult education (Tough, 1979; Brookfield, 1986; Candy, 1991) has progressed to a level of theoretical elegance that suggests a need for further research. One methodological approach that has been utilized (Cavaliere, 1988, 1992) to further expand the theoretical base is the use of naturalistic inquiry in the analyses of case studies as a way of advancing understanding of self-direction. This qualitative methodology allows the researcher to explore behaviors manifested by self-directed learners, the contextual forces utilized during their learning projects. Through content analyses of dairies, biographies, autobiographies, and historical data, patterns of learning behaviors and utilization of



resources are revealed that support the conceptual learning processes utilized by adults engaged in self-directed learning.

The application of naturalistic inquiry as a research methodology in the analyses of case studies to further understand self-direction in adult learning provides the researcher with tools to identify, quantify and categorize and learning patterns that constitute the essence of the peculiarities and similarities of the phenomenon of self-directed learning. Content analysis tactics coupled with naturalistic inquiry guide the researcher through data presented in case studies that result in multiple layers of data analyses that can begin with frequency counts of verbs that indicate various types of learning behaviors as initial layers of data. The patterns can begin to arise from the data upon subsequent analysis that describe repetitive cycles and processes of learning in various context that serve as patterns that may begin to describe self-directed phenomenon for individuals engaged in learning. Then resources and contextual forces can be described and analyzed that facilitate or impede the phenomenon. These descriptive analyses begin to reveal learning processes, forces driving information through learning networks and motivational factors influencing self-directed learning.

Descriptive analyses of self-directed learning is the beginning of the research agenda. Continuation studies that compare and contrast self-directed learning in multiple contexts, at various stages of adult development for various cultures suggest rich sources for further research. Theoretical framework that may contribute to furthering this research agenda would include learning theory, adult development psychology, communication theory and social network theory. This research approach is atypical in that it focuses primarily on the processes of the self-directed learning phenomena and seeks to expand the analytical perspectives presently used in the field of adult education.

#### MEASUREMENT OF SELF-DIRECTION IN LEARNING (Guglielmino)

My charge as a part of this panel is to discuss the measurement of self-direction in learning, particularly with reference to the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS). Long and Redding (1991), in a review of abstracts of dissertations from 1966-1991, identified at least 11 different instruments or interview schedules which had been used to investigate various aspects of self-direction in learning. The most widely used instrument was the SDLRS.

Studies using the SDLRS have provided strong evidence that a generic attribute of readiness for self-directed learning exists and can be measured. This research has documented that there are wide variations in the frequency of activities which might be classified as self-direction in learning with study populations, and the frequency of these activities has been proven to correlate positively with scores on the SDLRS. Other studies have found SDLRS scores to be positively correlated with measures of independent mastery, independent judgment, use of internal criteria for evaluation, curiosity for learning, perceived scholastic competence, self-esteem, and creativity.

Research involving the SDLRS has been reviewed in several sources (e.g., Long & Redding, 1991; Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991).

The list of qualities and characteristics with which the SDLRS has been shown to correlate bears a strong resemblance to the list assembled by Candy (1991). Based on a review of the work of 20 authors, he noted that "There is a remarkable degree of congruence in the qualities and characteristics" that various researchers have attributed to the self-directed learner. "That such similar profiles of the autonomous learner abound is evidence of a definite cluster of competencies by which such people might be recognized" (pp. 129-130).

Therefore, Candy's review also supports the presence of a recognizable trend toward, or readiness for, self-direction in learning. However, he questions the appropriateness of instruments designed to measure "self-directedness" as a generic accomplishment or attribute when a learner's autonomy in a specific situation is likely to vary with the "type of learning project, the level of learning, and the learner's purposes" (p. 309). Certainly there are factors that affect whether self-direction in learning occurs in a specific context or situation, and the interpretive and constructivist approach to research which Candy recommends using to explore these interactions will produce (and has produced) rich and valuable insights into self-direction in learning. Does that negate the value of a generic measure such as the SDLRS? Hardly. While learners may react differently in specific situations (e.g., a math-phobic not choosing self-directed study in calculus), there is still value in being able to assess the generic tendency to seek self-direction in learning. It is my contention that self-direction in learning is such a desirable outcome and so essential for achieving a satisfying life in a rapidly changing world that we are obligated to explore it through as many avenues as we can devise.

My goal and Candy's are quite similar. We are simply approaching our goals through different paths. We do need to know much more about the dynamics of self-direction in learning in specific situations, but we also quantitative tools to measure general tendencies.

Candy labels the use of instruments as "positivist" and criticizes the positivist paradigm as unnatural and artificial; but the one best way to promote the development of readiness for self-direction in learning on a large scale is to convince our educational institutions that it is vital and that a major part of their responsibility is to facilitate its development. Like the positivist paradigm, most educational institutions could be described as "unnatural" and "artificial"; they are interested in measuring genuine gains in any kind of learning they attempt to promote. My initial interest in the area of self-direction was to promote it, perhaps by designing a program to enhance SDL readiness. But what were the characteristics of a self-directing learner? A Delphi study answered that question for me in 1976 as Candy's comprehensive review of literature did for him in 1991, when he identified a composite of over 100 "attributes, characteristics, qualities, and competencies . . . linked with successful independent learning which the learner capable of autonomous learning will characteristically [exhibit]" (p. 459). Should we not use our ability to measure this composite as a means of examining the results of efforts

to increase levels of readiness for self-directed learning and to continue to explore its relationship with other significant variables?

#### EMERGING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SELF-DIRECTION (Caffarella)

In order for the research agenda in self-directed learning to move forward, it will be important to more fully ground such efforts on the various theoretical perspectives that have emerged from earlier research. These theoretical developments can perhaps be better understood in terms of several key themes which have emerged from this literature base: 1) recognition and examination of processes through which learners engage in self-directed learning; 2) definition and debate regarding the salient characteristics and preferences of adult learners; and 3) identification of ways to foster initiative and learner control in formal institutional settings.

The first theme, examination of the processes of how adult learners for about taking the primary responsibility for their own learning, has fascinated adult educators for the last two decades (Long and Assoc., 1992; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). The most popular and most often quoted scenario of how adults learn in this mode is described by Tough (1979) and Knowles (1975). These descriptions imply adults use a mostly linear and step-wise process and mirror very closely how we depict the process of learning in formal settings. A second scenario of the learning process is not so well planned or linear in nature; instead there is an emphasis on opportunities that people find in their own environments or on chance encounters (e.g., Candy, 1991). Recently, Cavaliere (1992) proposed a third scenario, with five specific stages to the process (inquiring, modeling, experimenting and practicing, theorizing and perfecting, and actualizing). What emerges from these latter two scenarios is that the process of self-directed learning is complex and still needs much more study.

The second theme, definition and debate regarding salient characteristics and preferences of adult learners, is grounded in the assumption that learning in adulthood means growth in self-direction and autonomy. The overarching concepts of self-responsibility and control over actions of learning are stressed by authors who have done work in this arena, either in the form of data-based studies or theory building (e.g., Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Candy, 1991). There have been two major challenges related to this work: 1) challenges to the notion of autonomy being the hallmark of learning in adulthood and 2) challenges to the idea that the choice of being self-directed and acting autonomous in a learning situation is not an all or nothing proposition.

The third theme, identification of ways to foster initiative and learner control in formal institutional settings, has also been widely discussed and for some adult educators a major goal. Tough (1979) and Knowles (1975) were among the first to urge that learner self-direction be incorporated into organized learning activities. More recently, models and specific tools for doing this have been proposed by Hiemstra and Sisco (1990), Candy (1991), Grow (1991), and Hammond and Collins (1991). Each of these models emphasizes how instructors can help learners become more self directed in their



learning, with specific roles suggested for both instructors and learners. Fundamental changes in attitudes and beliefs of both instructors and learners about what constitutes formal instruction are needed for learner self-direction to become a major part of an institution's education program.

Future directions for research should continue in each of these three thematic areas, with the emphasis placed on the affirmation or revision of the various models and ideas that have been explored through data-based research with a broad spectrum of subjects. In addition, what we know about self-directed learning could also further inform our thinking about such areas as adult cognitive development, adult intelligence, critical thinking (Caffarella, 1993).

#### REACTION (Kasworm)

Previous experts have provided valuable insights regarding directions, issues, and implication of present and future research in self-direction. I suggest that we consider "convergent" ideas to both expand and enhance our understanding of self-direction, as well as to provide connections between self-direction and other conceptual areas of learning. In particular, I would like to suggest comparative examination of self-direction for children and youth in relation to adult learners, as well as consider the nature of a novice versus an expert self-directed learner. In essence, are there developmental skill, knowledge, attitude, or value levels that reflect the "development" of self-direction in learning? How would an experience by an accomplished self-directed learner differ from that of a less accomplished self-directed learner pursuing a fuzzy learning goal? As with my colleagues, I would also draw upon adult development, adult learning, and cognitive psychology research, but I also believe that we need to develop some form of typology and language to aid research in describing this very complex and dynamic phenomenon.

#### REACTION (Long)

As is evident from the comments made by the panel members self-directed learning means different things to different people. Their situation is not new as Allen Tough and Malcolm Knowles, both of whom identified with the contemporary interest in the topic, really wrote about different phenomena that we currently find discussed as self-directed learning. Gradually, however, it appears that the difference between what Knowles called self-directed learning and what Tough called learning projects is becoming recognized. This does not solve all of the conceptual problems for us; however we continue to confuse the implications of defining and conceptualizing self-directed learning according to: (a) its social characteristics (i.e. independent solitary learning activity); (b) its locational characteristics (i.e. learning together in one location vs. distance education methods); and (c) its psychological characteristics (i.e. a mental process that may, and can, occur in group learning situations, face to face situations, with a tutor, or in isolation). Until we come to agreement upon what is the sufficient



explanation (or cause) for self-direction in learning, we will continue to encounter a variety of difficulties in communication, practice, and research.

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**PANEL**  
**LEARNING FROM THE HIGHLANDER EXPERIENCE:**  
**CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE POST-CIVIL RIGHTS PERIOD**

**Tom Heaney, Lindeman Center; Judy Austermiller, Boehm Foundation;  
Lee Williams, University of Tennessee; John Gaventa, University of Tennessee.**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Tom Heaney**

In recent years, Highlander has become widely known among aspiring adult education professionals - celebrated, in fact - a legend all the more remarkable because it is living still. While its early history is often reduced in the curriculum of graduate programs to an array of anecdotes which support the profession's renewed but marginal interest in social purpose, the more recent work of Highlander suggests a vision and potential for adult education as a local response to national and global issues.

We've become selectively fascinated with "our" past, perhaps because our present has become so boring, so like schooling. We recognize that Highlander's past is inextricably linked with the great social movements in the 30s, 40s and 50s. But even more fascinating is Highlander's endurance. Actually, there have been many Highlanders, each articulated as its work moved across the South and adapted itself to changing conditions of oppression and an emerging potential for collective action. Only Highlander's principles and commitments have remained the same.

In the presentations that follow we will have an opportunity to hear about research growing from Highlander's more recent history - events that have unfolded since the fine and seminal texts of Frank Adams, Aimee Horton, John Glen and others. We will look closely at the contributions which the more contemporary achievements of Highlander have made to the field of adult education - contributions which will engender discussion of the principles of democratic education for social change.

**THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM:  
DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP FOR THE LONG HAUL**

**Judy Austermiller**

The Southern Appalachian Leadership Training (SALT) Program began in 1975 with funds garnered through the Ford Foundation's Leadership Development Program. While the program was not administratively housed at the Highlander Center until 1987, Highlander Center staff played a central role in designing the program and articulating its philosophical underpinnings. The program's birth coincided with a political period in Appalachia, after the War on Poverty, in which Appalachians began to assert their right and intent to seek their own solutions to the region's economic and social injustices. Appalachian Studies programs emerged at this time in colleges and universities in the region, as did new cultural institutions aimed at reclaiming and preserving the region's cultural traditions and community development efforts that sought more appropriate approaches to the region's particular politico-economic reality. These new programs and a growing Appalachian consciousness required a new, indigenous and more plentiful leadership base, and the SALT Program

responded to that need.

The program has displayed a consistent, though by no means rigid, adherence to the goals articulated for the program from its inception. Those goals are three: 1) to help develop and expand the indigenous leadership of rural Appalachia that is responsive to the needs of ordinary mountain people; 2) to work with emerging leadership in existing groups in order to make those groups more effective; and 3) to help delineate the nature and causes of prevalent problems in the region and devise strategies for more effectively dealing with them. Hence, the program sought simultaneously to effect individual leaders, their community groups and organizations, and the political climate of the region.

The educational content and structure of the SALT Program's leadership training has maintained several consistent themes over time. Each class of from six to fifteen fellows has participated in a series of weekend residential workshops over a six to nine-month period. These were frequently, but not always held at Highlander. The training sessions allowed time for participants to establish and frame the content of the training. Workshops included peer discussions in which participants shared their experiences and helped each other problem-solve difficulties they were having in their current work. The training also included skills sessions (public speaking, dealing with media, research, fund raising, as examples) frequently employing outside resource people. In addition, some element of travel or field visits were built into the program to help participants begin to see their own communities through a wider angle lens.

While initially focused primarily on Appalachia, when the program was finally housed at Highlander in 1987, it expanded its scope to include the South in keeping with the broader constituency base of Highlander's work historically. In the eighteen years since its inception, the program has trained more than 250 leaders from these two regions. And, while it is easy to point to a few prominent stars among the graduates—a Legislative Aide in the Virginia Legislature, and environmental and mine safety attorney, a Town Manager, a community radio producer, a foundation program officer—the program's efforts are better judged by the many graduates who are seen not only for their career accomplishments but for their on-going activism in their communities—on environmental issues in organizations like Save Our Cumberland Mountains; organizing farm workers in Florida and the new immigrant labor force in Appalachia and the South; founding an African-American Cultural Center in Southwest Virginia; building new community enterprises and helping to shape the regional debate about appropriate and sustainable economic development; and organizing to change the terms of debate and ultimately the structure of public school financing in West Virginia. SALT Program graduates have not only led such efforts but have in turn helped to train many additional members of their communities into leadership positions.

This last point is worthy of considerable discussion in examining grassroots leadership development approaches. Former SALT fellows do not frequently credit the program with particular personal or program successes, nor with specific lessons they took from the program. Instead, they note that the program helped them find their own voice, gain the self-confidence to express it more effectively, and develop a broader perspective on their community's problems. But most strikingly, they remember staff modeling a democratic

leadership style in the training that respected diverse experiences and viewpoints and enabled each individual to find and claim her/his own leadership strengths. This finding provides a valuable key to understanding how better to structure grassroots leadership development training and to assess its effectiveness.

## **FREE SPACES AND RESISTANCE: ISSUES FOR CRITICAL EDUCATORS IN THE 90'S**

Lee L. Williams

Much of Highlander's work over its history has been with groups that are viewed as powerless within the political economic system. The very idea that the powerless are considered marginal by the powerful in society has created free spaces where the hidden transcript of resistance may be carried on. Sarah Evans and Harry Boyte In Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America (1986: 18), find that "particular sorts of public places in the community, free spaces, are the environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue. Put simply, free spaces are settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision. . . Democratic action depends on these free spaces, where people experience a schooling in citizenship and learn a vision of the common good in the course of struggling for change."

Highlander Research and Education Center is one such free space. And as one of the more well known of these spaces of resistance, it provides many of the guiding principles concerning the practice of popular education as well as a central location in which marginal groups carry on the struggle for a participatory and democratic society.

While Highlander has served as an inspiration to many adult educators, its primary work has been to work directly with grassroots communities for empowerment, not to share its methods. But in the early 1990's, partly as a way of responding to the numerous requests of educators, activists, community leaders and organizers to learn from its approach, Highlander began to offer a week long Institute for Education and Social Change. The Institute brings people together, who are active in both practical and theoretical issues related to education and social change, to focus on popular education and participatory research methods in a variety of social settings from individual interactions to large-scale institutional structures. These workshops provide a free space in which to strategize, exchange, and develop ideas relating to popular education. The importance of these spaces and places for critical education and critical educators can not be underestimated.

My research grows from the discussions of workshop participants at the Institute for Education and Social Change at Highlander in May of 1993, which focussed especially on the issues faced by emerging, popular residential centers. Workshop attendees hailed from 12 states and provinces in the US and Canada. Participants included several groups affiliated with formal academic institutions attempting to bridge the gap between the university and the community, a number of groups already working at varying levels with community education programs, and several fledgling centers ready to move forward with their plans in a more direct way. Projects involving education for social change included community development



plans, community/university relations, land rights, natural resources, problems in traditional education, homelessness, leadership training, and organizing. Topics addressed during workshops included participatory research methods, popular education methods, issues of staffing, administering, funding, structuring and managing residential education programs, and residential education centers as free spaces past and present.

Much discussion and exchange emerged around these and other questions generating several themes around which my research will be structured. Eight key themes emerged from the workshop: the underlying ideas behind free spaces and places; our principles and practice; barriers to putting our principles into practice; overcoming the barriers; choosing issues and programs; the role of the educator; the role of culture in adult education, and operating a residential center.

I will assess these themes in relationship to the broader argument of the need for free spaces where the hidden transcripts of resistance may be voiced. (See Scott, 1990) Within scholarly literature there has been very little cross over between educational theorists and social theorists about this notion of spaces of resistance. We concur with Giroux (1988: 119) that, "Theory must be seen as the production of forms of discourse that arise from various specific social sites. Such a discourse may arise from the universities, from peasant communities, from worker councils, or from within various social movements. The issue here is that radical educators recognize that these different sites give rise to various forms of theoretical production and practice." Bearing this thought in mind a bridge will be constructed to connect the gulf between educational and social theorists operating in both formal and informal settings. Each of these sites of resistance provides diverse and critical insights into the nature of domination and the possibilities for social and self emancipation, and they do so from the historical and social particularities that govern their meaning. Thus, the social spheres that make up this space where a counter-logic to domination is fostered may represent the few remaining terrains which provide the powerless with the possibility of human agency and autonomy. And indeed these may be the places where radical educators can develop a critical rather than pragmatic understanding of education for social change.

#### **LEARNING FROM HIGHLANDER'S RECENT HISTORY: REFLECTIONS OF A FORMER STAFF MEMBER**

**John Gaventa**

Highlander is best known for its adult education in relationship to social movements, most especially the labor movement of the 1930's and the civil rights movement of the late 1950's and early 1960's. This work occurred during what Myles Horton often called "peak" periods—times in which emerging social movements provided clear focus and attention to Highlander's work.

But these periods have been relatively brief and illusive in America's social history. Consequently, much of Highlander's sixty-year history has also been spent working in the "valleys"—times without a clear movement to unify social action. And, while much of the research on Highlander's contribution to adult education grows from the works on its earlier movement-related history, less attention has been given to its contributions in non-movement times, especially from the 1970's until today.

Though less known, the programs in these periods have also been important. The "valley" periods have been times for developing grassroots leadership and organization (as we see in Judy Austermillers work on the SALT program), for nurturing voices and spaces of resistance (as Lee Williams points out), for experimenting with new issues, and for developing and pioneering new educational methods.

I recently stepped down after 17 years as a staff member of Highlander. I acknowledge that I may still be a bit too close to Highlander to reflect objectively on it's recent contributions to education and social change. But, I do think we must begin to use the experiences of Highlander and other popular centers like it to think critically about adult education and social transformation in the late twentieth century.

Any analysis of Highlander's contribution to education and social change must be linked to the social context. The Citizenship schools of the 1950's interesting as an adult education experiment, but their real significance can only be understood in the context of the segregated South, which disenfranchised blacks through illiteracy, and in their importance as building blocks to the later civil rights movement. In the current context, how can we understand key contributions of Highlander's work? I believe the following are important.

1. Contribution to "movements in the making": Among others, the last twenty years have seen the emergence of two interrelated crises in the United States and worldwide. The first, perhaps most recognized, is the environmental crises; the second is the economic crisis growing from a restructuring of the world economy, and characterized by a greater gap between the haves and have nots. While no clear, unified movement has emerged in response to these critical issues, there have been, as Highlander's Larry Wilson says, significant "moving." As in the past, Highlander has provided strong educational support for grassroots communities directly affected by these crises. In the environmental area, the work has included the recent STP schools and Environmental Economic program, as well as much earlier work on land, occupational disease, strip mining, toxics—all of which helped to shape the current shift in the debate from environmental quality to environmental justice. Less visible perhaps, but also significant, have been the research and educational programs for building economic democracy, sustainability and community revitalization from the grassroots up, in a time when grassroots approaches to the solution of economic issues have all but been abandoned.

2. In the context of increased globalization (of almost everything), Highlander's recent work has pioneered the formation of international grassroots linkages on common problems and common issues. Globalization forces a reconceptualization of how to link communities affected by similar issues, a cornerstone of Highlander's educational philosophy. Recent exchanges between communities affected by Union Carbide after Bhopal, popular educators in Central America, Africa and Appalachia, women affected by the new international division of labor in Tennessee and the maquiladoras and others represent new forms of community-based experiential education that redefines community-based education away from geographical lines.

3. In the context of the recognition of multiple voices and multiple ways of knowing (in the

post-modern period), Highlander has been a place that has facilitated a meeting ground of diverse cultural boundaries. Rather than choose a primary constituency as in the past, it has struggled to link diversities and connect the "isms" of class, gender, race, homophobia, age, region, nation, culture. This has not always been easy, and we have often failed. But, in the process we have struggled to build links within diversity that can build multiple voices for social change. This is especially critical in a period of the rise of cultural and ethnic separation.

4. In the context of increasing control and professionalization of knowledge and of the commodification of culture that characterizes the information age, Highlander's work to promote peoples' knowledge, to break the hierarchies of knowledge through participatory research, and to strengthen popular culture is critical for supporting communities of resistance to dominant hegemony. (see Williams piece.)

5. Finally, in the context of the demise of so many progressive organizations and centers, the fact that Highlander has lasted and continues to remain relevant is no small achievement. Especially, in the post Cold War period, where traditional ideologies and institutions of the both Left and Right are being questioned, a place where new strategies for progressive change can be built directly from the experiences of the people, rather than on the basis of old ideology, could not be more critical.

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## **GIVING PRACTITIONERS A SAY: Participatory Models of Research For Adult Basic Education Mathematics**

**By Esther D. Leonelli, Martha W. Merson and Bonnie B. Mullinix**

**Abstract:** This paper will describe three current, federally funded, and integrally connected projects investigating the teaching of adult basic education mathematics in Massachusetts. Practitioner participation in the research is discussed herewith attention to the pragmatic, professional, and political both in terms of the treatment of practitioners and topics and outcomes of research.

In recent years, changing the role of subject of research studies to that of participant and contributor to the research process has become a focus of discussion in the adult education research community. The importance of an inside perspective as a grounding influence for research is being increasingly recognized on many fronts. The NCTM guidelines for research, for example, call for the members of the community being studied to participate more fully in various stages of research (Sowder, 1989, 43-44). Individual researchers such as Patty Lather argue that relationships between researcher and researched should be mutually beneficial (Lather, 1986). In light of top-down reform movements and their concomitant research and forays into staff development, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) have advocated that teachers assume the role of researcher within their classrooms. These three sources agree that educational research must be pragmatic, political, and respectful of practitioners. The authors of this paper who represent the projects discussed here, agree with these premises. Their projects engaged teachers in different ways and to different ends while maintaining a standard of pragmatic, political, and professional input from practitioners. This paper will examine how that involvement has both shaped and been shaped by the interactions between research purpose and methodology.

Within the context of this paper we examine the different research roles practitioners have taken in each of these projects and highlight both the purpose and outcome of their participation. The first project, Research into Adult Basic Education Mathematics (RABEM), fits practitioners' participation within a more traditional, structured research activity. Practitioners were involved in identifying the questions, designing the framework and assisting in the analysis and interpretation of data collected by the researchers. In the second project, practitioners were involved in study circles, exploring their environments, and digesting, reacting to and adapting a set of documented standards on mathematics instruction for K-12 learners to their own specific adult populations. This involved practitioners in a more open-ended, qualitative inquiry that was compiled by two key practitioners in *The ABE Math Standards Project Vol. I, The Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Math Standards (1994)*. In the Teacher Inquiry Project, instructors identified research questions related to the standards they developed in the previous project, designed and implemented a research project. Practitioners took on responsibility for data collection, analysis, and write up. The practitioners or teachers referred to throughout this paper are part of the 22 person statewide Adult Basic Education Math Team which has brought together math teachers with different backgrounds who teach in a variety of ABE settings.

The purpose of the RABEM project is to identify and examine key factors that influence ABE mathematics instruction in Massachusetts and to develop a detailed "picture" of the adult basic mathematics learning environment. RABEM was originally conceived of as a preliminary step to further curriculum, staff, and instructional development in mathematics in the state, as defined in the Math Team's mission. Basic



research questions addressed program structure, instruction, instructor background and attitudes, learner attitudes and preferences, content curriculum and assessment strategies. In structuring this ethnographic inquiry into ABE mathematics, a combination of survey and case study methodologies was used. These spanned three phases of data collection including:

Phase I - Questionnaires to program administrators and instructors;

Phase II - Interviews with instructors and observations of math classes;

Phase III - Observations of math classes and interviews with adult learners.

Phase I provided general quantitative background information on the programs and allowed for a thoughtful selection of a representative case study sample for the qualitative activities carried out in Phases II and III.

The principal investigator, Bonnie Mullinix, established a connection with the Massachusetts ABE Math Team, adult ed teachers of math and other subjects, during the initial stages of the project design. To assure the appropriateness of the research, a Research Design and Dissemination (RD&D) Network was created that included six Math Team members. Her purpose in including practitioners was to ground the research in the instructional reality of the ABE classroom. It was felt that practitioners would be in the best position to help decide who should be asked what and why (i.e. why would this be important to know and/or what could be done with what we found out). They would also be the best people to sort through data. Practitioners significantly contributed to first drafts and pre-testing of instructor questionnaires and interview guides, practitioners with observational research background provided input to the classroom observation guide. When it came time to design the learner interview guide, the group advised that learner input would be essential to ensure relevance and appropriate wording of questions. Through a connection with the ABE Math Standards Project, learners in an ABE math class expressed interest in playing a role in the RABEM project and, ultimately, helped to design the learner interview. After much of the data had been gathered and coded, members of the RD&D team were asked to review the data, to comment on what surprised them and what suspicions were confirmed for them.

Due to the limited budget and comparatively large scale of the project and substantial dependence on quantitative data collection, tabulation and analysis, the primary responsibility for the project lay with the research coordinator and a small research support staff. So while questions and instruments were generated by the practitioner teams, responsibility for producing, distributing and/or implementing these instruments lay with the research coordinator. Five of the six practitioners were not involved in collection, entering or coding of data. While they contributed to data interpretation and analysis, responsibility for final analysis and write up fell to the research coordinator. Beyond the review and provision of feedback on draft papers and final reports, direct participation in the research ended with the joint data analysis sessions. Opportunities for collaborative dissemination of results (such as this one) are being explored.

By guiding the development of the research design and instruments, practitioners made sure that the right people were asked the right questions about topics that would produce useful and illustrative responses. In analyzing data, practitioners brought an understanding of the context and issues of ABE math instruction that allowed them to see things that an ungrounded researcher might not have. For example, practitioners who were familiar with certain workbooks noted that their sequencing of math topics may have influenced teachers' outlooks as indicated by their responses to questions. Teachers on the RD&D network were also able to situate findings in the broader landscape of literacy, including changes in assessment during the last decade. In determining which of the findings to focus on sharing with various audiences, practitioners were able to readily identify the responses that had the most to say about their situations. This helped to tailor research reports and presentations for a variety of audiences, place greater emphasis on key findings, and point towards recommendations for improvement in practices. In one

instance, practitioners pointed out that a conference session for teachers would not need to include extensive information about the learners served in Massachusetts literacy programs. Most teachers know student demographics firsthand. Teachers are more likely to be interested in the findings about instruction and about themselves as a group: their math backgrounds and training. By involving practitioners and key support personnel across the state, the likelihood of producing research that can affect how ABE math is taught in the state is much greater. By allowing practitioners to guide the research from the outset we helped to ensure interest and control over the research from the outset and created what we found to be a mechanism for on-going dissemination of meaningful results.

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Math Standards Project was a year-long teacher research project. The research topic of the *National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics* and their applicability to adult basic math instruction was chosen by the ABE Math Team as an area of inquiry which merited study. Such a study has been suggested elsewhere as critically needed in the field of adult basic education and, in particular, adult numeracy (Gall; Azzolino). The project design consisted of focused study, reflection, and field-tested implementation of classroom practices based upon a shared reading, discussion, and adoption of a set of instructional and assessment standards drafted by the teachers.

During the winter of 1992-1993, twenty adult education teachers met monthly in four work groups or study circles. Each group focused on one of four distinct ABE instructional settings: basic literacy, ESL, GED, or the Workplace Education classroom. As a starting point for their reflection, the product coordinators, Esther Leonelli and Ruth Schwendeman, asked each group of practitioners to describe their learners and the environments in which they taught. They were then asked to read the NCTM Standards in light of the adult learner and to consider their applicability or not to teaching their adult students. Reports from the groups summarizing their deliberations were synthesized, edited, and compiled by the product coordinators. Subsequently two drafts were circulated for review by the teacher researchers with revisions made based upon the oral and written input of these practitioners. The tangible result of their study and reflection was the adoption and publication of *The ABE Math Standards Project, Volume I, The Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Math Standards* (1994).

A subsidiary goal of the project was to develop a common vision for the field of adult math instruction through reading, writing, doing math as a group, and reflection. Unanticipated outcomes were the development of a common language and a common set of experiences shared by practitioners who read and struggled to articulate their own philosophy of math education. One teacher stated,

It just helped clarify my thinking. It was wonderful. It was a process where you were never battling, you were stating your views and they were stated really clearly and you listened . . . When we actually came to the consensus, I was often happier with the consensus than I was with the original view. . . . The consensus was not just giving up things that we cared about, it was really clarifying things that maybe we hadn't thought about. That's what made it so exciting to me. It moved me personally forward . . ."

(Francis, p. 23).

The common language included a set of shared terms such as "mathematics as communication" or "realia." The power of this language was revealed in the fall of 1993. Math Team teachers were asked to collaborate and develop five hands-on workshops for an in-state conference. Four of the topics came from the lifelong learning standards: Mathematics as Problem Solving, as Reasoning, as Communication, and Mathematical Connections. Without much ado, teachers from across the state planned their workshops without misunderstandings as to what concepts fell under what topic. From the collaborative writing and intensive reviewing of the standards, everyone could get on

with the work of planning without extensive conversations about what the topic meant. By the fall of 1993, common experiences included not only the tasks we'd done together, like the common tasks of writing and reading the standards, but also experiences like connecting more and more daily life experiences to mathematics. "I see the math in everything," one teacher comments. "My students and I are always saying, 'this would make a good word problem!'" Part of the common experience was becoming more confident. "Sometimes I feel like kind of an expert in math. I never visualized myself as that before" (Francis, p. 6).

The teacher inquiry project involving Math Team teachers evolved from the interest in the new standards for math instruction. The adult ed teachers chose teacher inquiry as the method for 1) implementing the new standards for math instruction, and 2) for testing the Standards' flexibility in terms of various ABE settings such as workplace, ESL, basic literacy and GED classes *and* their resilience in the face of the constraints of ABE such as open-entry and open-exit policies and multilevel classes. The project's purpose, however, was broader than that: it posited that teachers would be the most reliable investigators of the Standards in their own classrooms. By encouraging teachers to take on the role of researcher, the project would further professional development and leadership in the movement for change. This segment of the paper will briefly explain how teachers conducted their research, that is how they arrived at their inquiry questions, collected and analyzed data, and wrote up their findings. The research generated two types of findings. The first set includes the findings from individual teachers that contain recommendations for the field. I include findings from the second set here which speak to teacher inquiry as a staff development model and a catalyst for change.

Embarking on teacher inquiry required a willingness to engage in research, to pose an inquiry question, and a sense of how one might piece together an answer to a question. Many teachers are not trained as researchers. At the beginning of the inquiry project, a few asked panicky questions about what was expected of them. Others have admitted since then that they had self-doubts. At a large group meeting, Martha Merson, who offered guidance on conducting teacher research, gave Math Team Members an overview of qualitative research. After seeing two members in conversation narrow interests into an inquiry question, the large group split up into small groups to tease out questions. During this same session, the options for data gathering were reviewed. By the end of the meeting, everyone had at least an initial inquiry question and a tentative plan for interviewing, taping, using logs, or other means to collect data in the classroom.

Teachers generally work independently. Their staff development frequently occurs independently or in a large group, lecture format. Both phases of the Standards Project, utilized small, working groups. The process for hatching an inquiry question matched either or both the participants' own teaching styles or personalities. The format for drawing out inquiry questions and for analyzing the data was analogous to a social classroom. More than any other aspect of the project, teachers praised the small working groups. "It's just wonderful to have this kind of sharing and dialogue going on. I feel like we're being a community of educators here. That's been very exciting. . . you feel like this is where you discuss educational issues" (Francis, p. 5-6).

In a mid-year evaluation of the Math Team as a staff development model, teachers spoke highly of the Math Team. Teachers praised the emphasis of the project as well as the structure: "I think every teacher needs time in their day to reflect and review what happened in the classroom if they're really going to be effective on an ongoing basis. And it's made me want to go to my supervisor and advocate for all instructors to have that time." (Francis, p. 28) Not only have teachers verbally praised the standards' and inquiry project's format, they have taken this knowledge and applied it to other situations. One teacher suggested that ten people for a new regional math group was too many. Based on his experience in the small work groups, he said, in groups of three or four you can get a lot more done. The response to this model of practitioner participation in



research suggests that a supportive group is key to making sense of and in fact sticking out the process.

The teachers' findings led them to make permanent changes in their teaching. Their insights, for example on the use of manipulatives, also contribute to the knowledge available on adults as learners. While manipulatives have gained a good number of adherents in the elementary school world, a number of adult educators have resisted them, worrying that their students would find blocks too childish. A number of the teachers' findings relate to this worry and speak to the effectiveness of manipulatives. First, at least one teacher completely reversed her position. Fully expecting to find that manipulatives fail with adults, and to document her learners' fears, this teacher instead wrote a compelling essay on experiential learning. Another teacher who believed in the use of manipulatives found that blocks did evoke a negative reaction from one student. Through her research, she learned that individuals may respond negatively to one kind of manipulative while embracing others. The overarching goal of using manipulatives is to promote learning using a tactile experience which students stand twice the chance of remembering: sensorily and tactilely. Yet another teacher found that using non-traditional problems or puzzlers as a major part of her curriculum yielded similar results. At the end of the class cycle, learners could remember the exact ten week curriculum in order. The most important message here is to note that effective math instruction must distinguish itself from the blur of daily in-school and out of school activities. To engage students, to highly motivate them with interesting problems, to provide tactile experiences is to change the math curriculum from a one dimensional subject to an exciting endeavor.

Overall findings from these projects are both different and complementary. With respect to purpose and outcome of practitioner participation, the RABEM project has found that including practitioners in the design of the research and the development of the instruments ensures responsiveness to the reality and interests of the ABE situation. Involving them in the interpretation of data supports the identification of critical themes for the findings. The Standards Development Project and the Standards Teacher Inquiry Project found that attention to teachers as learners, writers and researchers has led to increased ownership of innovation and changes in attitude, approach and practice. The integration and coordination between the projects has provided a depth of understanding that would not have been possible taken individually. Practitioner participation has grounded the research endeavors in Massachusetts; the research is thus driven by pragmatic interests. By including practitioners as writers and researchers, teachers are in a position to influence policy, to become leaders in math reform. Finally, teachers in these projects were treated professionally. For those of us who want or research change in classrooms, who offer staff development, fund it or advocate for it, we must take notice of the three important pieces of these projects: teachers own the change agenda, change is supported by small and large groups that break isolation and allow for learning to take place in social ways, and finally, that teachers are treated as professionals throughout the process: that is that they are paid for their time. If these three pieces are in place, then we can expect that when we give practitioners a say we will hear honestly what goes on in classes and what works for adult learners.

The designs shared in this paper are meant to provide a range of models for practitioner participation in research that can be used by researchers who continue to accept the rewarding challenge of including teachers in their research. In anticipation of a shift in orientation from "whether" to involve practitioners to "how best" to involve them, we offer this paper as a contribution to a growing dialogue.



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## **DIVERSITY IN CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN ADULT EDUCATION: CONFLICTS AND COMMONALITIES**

Kyung Hi Kim<sup>1</sup>, Ramon Flecha, Mechthild Hart, Fred Schied, Joye Knight, and  
Sherman Stanage

**Abstract:** The objectives of this symposium are to a) explore the commonality and differences inherent in five distinct critical approaches to the study of adult education: Neo-Marxist, Feminist, Phenomenological, Afrocentricist, and Communicative Modernism (Habermasian Theory), b) examine their impact on the study of adult education, and c) critically examine the role of commitment in bringing about social change through adult education.

The development of theory, practice and research in adult education necessarily consists of many different visions and perspectives. Recent years have seen the emergence of critical perspectives on the theory and practice of adult education. This symposium will focus on five major critical approaches to the study of adult education: Neo-Post Marxist, Feminist, Phenomenological, Afrocentricist and Communicative Modernism (Habermasian Theory). By focusing on five distinct approaches within the critical paradigm, this session explores and articulates where these different perspectives share common ground and where they disagree or come into conflict with each other. This should help us to understand theoretical differences and commonalities, but also practical shortcomings by failing to learn from each other and to integrate this learning into our own educational work. Moreover, we may come to understand better how such conflict and/or common ground can lead to a development of clearer, more in-depth critical analysis of adult education.

### **Communicative Adult Education (Ramon Flecha)**

#### **THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY IN THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION.**

As traditionally understood, modernity was based on the division and relation between subject (one who transforms) and object (one who is transformed). In the field of education, the subject can be the teacher and the object the student. In the field of politics, the leader or the party can be the subject and the citizens or workers the object. These concepts prevailed until the late 70s, and like indoctrination and conscientization, were built on traditional modernism.

#### **POSTMODERNISM: ONE MORE REBELLION AGAINST MODERNITY.**

In the late 70s and the early 80s postmodernism was very influential in Southern Europe. It proposed the Nietzschean position of dissolution of the subject. In other words, postmodernists stated that any orientation to transformation is a wrong perspective because no one knows what is good or bad, right or wrong. In the postmodernist view there are no values superior to other values. There are no universal values. No approach to adult education is better than any other. For instance, a democratic approach is no better than an authoritarian approach.

## THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION AND ADULT EDUCATION

Like postmodernism, the theory of communicative action (TCA) rejects the modernist foundation of the transformation of the object by the subject. Instead of the postmodernist proposal of the dissolution of the subject, TCA grounds the contribution of communicative rationality in intersubjectivity.

Within the communicative approach--unlike within the traditional modernist viewpoint--there is no subject knowing the best option. But within the communicative approach--unlike within the postmodernist viewpoint--we can state that some kinds of conduct are right and some are wrong. Free consensus among participants makes the difference.

Within the communicative approach--unlike within the traditional modernist viewpoint--there is no subject knowing the best curriculum for every context and situation. We cannot make the claim for more emphasis on teaching or more on dialogue every time and everywhere. No one knows the best solution for any particular educational situation. Within the communicative approach--unlike within postmodernist viewpoint--we can state that some curricular options are right and some are wrong. For instance, we can reject indoctrination by dictatorships and we can favor rational dialogic discourse.

### **Why is a Feminist Perspective Important for Adult Education** (Mechthild Hart)

The field of adult education seems to be paying a bit more attention to feminism during a time when the history and meaning of the very term have become problematic. Is feminism to keep the field of professional adult education in good standing by giving it a radical bent? However, to speak of "feminism" vs. "women" in adult education still seems to be troublesome, especially since the newly accepted terms "diversity" and "multiculturalism" are offering less provocative approaches to education. Undoubtedly, feminism reverberates with old "modernist" concepts such as domination or exploitation, thus leaving behind the allegedly politically neutral arena of professional adult education.

However, feminism has to do with **differences between women and men**, no matter what their color, class, or nationality, and with a location of these differences in material and ideological structures. And it has to do with **differences between women**, differences that are strongly related to color, class, or nationality.

However, by placing the issue of power (in the sense of power over, or domination) at the center of feminist critiques, "difference" loses its politically neutral meaning. Instead, "difference" clearly indicates structures of dominance which take advantage and exploit different definitions of "female" and "male" by assigning them to different tasks, responsibilities, abilities, values (and many other things). These differences produce and reproduce silences and invisibilities, and they eclipse patterns of oppression and exploitation which are inseparable from the distinctions between female and male, however interwoven with color or class.

To give an example: By simply looking at the U.S. (without however, neglecting an international perspective) one can see that poverty is growing, and that the majority of the poor are women and children. Both work and poverty are gendered, although they cannot be divorced from race/ethnicity, or class. If the poorest members of society

are women and their children, one cannot avoid taking recourse to and developing a feminist analysis, especially when one focuses on work and education.

This means that the gendered nature of work, poverty, and welfare has to be taken into consideration because gender is a primary analytical category. For instance, as Zinn (1992, p.86) observes with references to African Americans, "the problems of male joblessness and female-headed households form themselves around gender."

To assume a feminist perspective as a member of society and as an educator means to recognize four dimensions. First, no educator, whether "professionalized" or "marginalized" can be considered politically neutral (as the very terms have a political connotation). Secondly, to realize one's political location (given or aspired to) means to acknowledge a variety of relations of power and their changing manifestations. Thirdly, to acknowledge the issue of power inevitably means to consider gender as a primary category--neither reducible to nor inseparable from other political categories. And lastly, to employ feminist analyses in order to investigate various forms of domination and exploitation also allows (or should allow) to rescue, affirm, and celebrate values and modes of thinking and acting that have been devalued under the rubric "female" or "feminine." All our critical perspectives as well as practices in adult education would take on a very different life if these differences are affirmed, and transcended, without extinguishing them.

In sum, it is impossible to leave out a political and economic analysis, i.e. to look at the role of adult education without trying to understand the larger social, political, and economic context within which educational theory and practice is shaped--whether in the institutional or professional arena or at the margins. And by acknowledging gender as a primary analytical category, the existence of many different feminist theories and practices has to be integrated into any educational perspective that wants to be critical.

#### **Neo-Marxist Perspectives and Adult Education** (Fred Schied)

While it has become popular to dismiss Marxist analysis as hopelessly locked into a modernistic paradigm and superseded by various postmodernist theories, this presentation argues that, to paraphrase Mark Twain, "rumors of Marxism's death have been greatly exaggerated." This is not to argue that Marxism in its orthodox form is still a viable force for critique, if it ever was. It is to suggest, however, that the traditions of Marxist analysis are indispensable in understanding the social context in which adult education occurs. The "fashionable trashing," of Marxism as Cornell West (1991) notes, is based on the assumption that vulgar Marxist thought somehow exhausts the entire Marxist tradition.

The monocausal and reductionist elements of vulgar Marxism have been severely critiqued for some time, most notably by the members of the Frankfurt school in the 1930s. That criticism, greatly influenced by feminism and postmodern thought, continues. Neo-Marxist theorists have pointed out the relative independence of cultural forces from economic and social processes as agents of cultural hegemony because they are representative of selective traditions, ideologies, and meanings. Thus the notion that class exists a priori outside historical struggle and that, therefore, the working class is the privileged agent of change, has been discredited. Moreover, the notion of a totalizing,



unified agency (whether the ruling class or the state) as the instrument of oppression has also been called into question. Feminists, especially those working within a socialist perspective, have pointed out the inherent paternalistic structure which undergirds much of traditional Marxist thought (Westwood, 1985, p. 230-241). Thus the primacy of social class have been strongly challenged by notions of gender, race and colonialism.

Contemporary Marxism thought has clearly been influenced by postmodernist theories. However, rather than being superseded, neo-Marxist thought provides a corrective to the more reactionary postmodernist perspectives that rely solely on textual and symbolic theories of difference by also pointing out historical and social components of difference. For example, the claim that theories (or discourse) constitute reality or at least predetermine what one sees is the hallmark of some postmodern thought (see Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991); Kincheloe & McLaren, 1993). Yet the economic dislocation and the exploitation of working people by international corporations is a reality. It is not merely constructed or read or produced by our theoretical perspective. This exploitation is real; these facts, as it were, are viewed and interpreted by our theories.

Marxism, conceived in this way is not a science, but a moral stance. It is, again citing Cornell West (1993) a self described African-American socialist Christian, "...the best theoretical tradition initiated in Europe (given capitalism's Eurocentric origins) and now produced around the world that provides indispensable analytical weapons in my fight with and for the wretched of the earth" and "...the complexities of racism, sexism, and homophobia cannot be fully grasped in light of Marxism, they surely cannot be understood without it" (p. 181).

Marxist analysis, conceived as moral stance and as theoretical tradition provides adult educators a way to place their practice in some kind of social context, despite living in fragmented and contradictory postmodern times.

#### **Afrocentricity as Critical Theory** (Joye Knight)

Education is not an objective, neutral process. It reflects the cultural, social, political, economic, and philosophical imperatives of a given society. In Western societies, educational systems are typically based on a European frame of reference with certain implicit assumptions and values. Ethnocentrism which generally characterizes adult education in the West negates the existence and validity of non-Western world views and value systems which contradicts the ideals of democracy. Thus, the inclusion of broader perspectives in academia would give substance to empty rhetorical oratory.

The emergence of Afrocentricity has helped to widen the limits of academia by raising critical issues concerning the validity of alternative approaches to knowledge construction. Afrocentricity is a frame of reference grounded in the African world view that defines epistemology, ontology and axiology (Asante, 1988). As such, Afrocentric theory elucidates the fact that there are domains of experience and of knowledge which cannot be understood solely on the basis of the Eurocentric traditions of logical positivism. By providing a means to reexamine and interpret adult education phenomena, the Afrocentric perspective helps globalize the adult education enterprise.

Afrocentric scholars further argue that though there may appear to be a variety of epistemological tools utilized within the Eurocentric community, there continues to be a

perpetuation of the Eurocentric tradition which disregards theoretical contributions made by "third world" adult educators and researchers. For example, Marxism with its apparent indifference to race as a determinant of social equality is demonstrative of the ineptness of Eurocentric theoretical explanations. Specifically, Marx's economic rationale which has enjoyed success in racially homogenous Western societies fails to account for the many examples of racial oppression that have been well documented in the histories of the United States and South Africa, for instance.

Habermas, who was beset by the social pathology of Nazi Germany, gave a critique of positivism as "science" and attempted to offer a more inclusive analytical approach to studying human phenomena. However, like Marxism, Habermasian theory also represents the Eurocentric domination in adult education. When, as in this case, a theory is named for an individual, the implicit notion is that knowledge is produced in isolation without any creditable contributions from others. This is clearly an expression of the individualistic nature that characterizes Eurocentric scholarship.

Given this brief explanation, Afrocentricity is a political tool that helps empower individuals and communities by creating an ideological arrangement wherein marginalized groups can better participate in political arenas. It stimulates both the actions of the lay community and the interests of the "scientific" community.

**C.S. Peirce's Phenomenological Pragmatism  
as "New Critical Theory"  
(Sherman M. Stanage)**

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) was the most original philosopher ever to be born and educated entirely in the United States. He is known as the originator of the philosophy of pragmatism (later, and more importantly, pragmatism), as a close friend of William James, and as one of John Dewey's most influential teachers. It is not widely known, however, that the interpretation of his vast corpus of writing was largely left to the logical positivists during the first half of the twentieth century. Partly as a consequence of their preemptions of the interpretations of Peirce's work, his profound phenomenological investigation—beginning at least two decades before Edmund Husserl's work in phenomenology—were largely ignored.

Neither is it widely known that during the early 1950s his work in phenomenology, semiotic, and metaphysics became increasingly available to wider audiences through phenomenological re-discoveries of his lifelong investigations. It is becoming increasingly apparent that much of his work clearly has profound potentialities and implications for adult education and adult learning theory. It is important, therefore, for theorists, practioners, and researchers in adult education to become much better acquainted with Peirce's work as what I term "new critical theory." His phenomenology and semiotics, especially might provide a methodology for establishing a common ground for general theory of adult learning.

I do not speak of a general theory or the general theory of adult education here. What I intend is "general theory, criticism, and critique, of contextualized adult learning properly termed adult education." Hence, Peirce's "pragmatism" can be seen as "new critical theory."

I claim that Peirce's views have profound implications for general theory of adult learning and adult education--with special reference to critical investigations and disciplines critique--for many reasons, only a very few of which I can offer briefly here in closing:

1. Peirce laid out the clearest, richest, and most consistent account of human practices, theory, and research within the social community of inquiry which I have been able to uncover in any body of relevant literature.
2. His account of human inquiry is applicable to any and all human problems and processes of problem-resolution whether these problems be those of individual self-realization or problems relating to movements for social reform.
3. His phenomenological investigations are rich instructive models of the ways of abductive, inductive, and deductive reasoning which can be applied as kinds and degrees of disciplined critique and criticism of all human discoveries, creations, and inventions, whether these are personal or social actions.
4. His theory of signs, constituting his most profound and original discoveries, if applied scrupulously to adult learning within its contextualizations as adult education could revolutionize fundamental approaches to human problems which are the focus of adult education.
5. His theoretical and applied logic--both his logic of the social and his social logic--could be of the utmost value in problem-solving and decision-making activities within the everydayness of the lifeworlds of persons.
6. His metaphysics of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness provides conceptualizations for practices not always identified and named but already widely in use of adult education.

#### Conclusion

Through examining these critical perspectives, what can we learn? Do these critical perspectives provide sufficient ground for the development of critical commitment within the field of adult education? What are the missing bases? In our attempts to clarify, redirect, and reconstruct the field of adult education (which includes the reexamination of such problematic phenomena as marginalization, professionalization, and the roles of adult education in social movements), where can we go? This symposium is an attempt to respond to meet the challenges of our time. In order to be able to face the challenges, we need to develop a more critical understanding of the nature and character of the challenges of our time including historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political contextual analyses. One way to initiate this task is through developing comparative frameworks and having a chance to learn from each other.

1. Kyung Hi Kim organized this symposium and compiled this paper.